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The KVUTZA

THE STRUCTURE, PROBLEMS, AND ACHIEVEMENTS
OF THE COLLECTIVE SETTLEMENTS IN PALESTINE

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TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

By SHALOM WURM

The KVUTZA

The Structure, Problems, and Achievements
Of the Collective Settlements in Palestine

by

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We are pleased to issue this study of the Kvutza by Shalom Wurm, one of the founders of the Bet Alpha settlement in Emek Yizreel, and Labor Palestine's delegate to American Zionist Youth. The writer presents a broad and realistic analysis of the structure, problems, and achievements of the Kvutza, as seen and experienced by himself for many years.

The Kvutza is one of the most distinctive features of the Jewish reconstruction in Palestine. As such it merits the attention not only of those who will some day become a part of it, but also of thinking men and women concerned with the social problems of our time.

This pamphlet was originally written in Hebrew. We wish to express our appreciation to Irvin Sternberg and Shlomo Grodzensky for their assistance in preparing the manuscript for publication.

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DR. F. E. BAUMANN

INTRODUCTION

In the Zionist propaganda of recent years, which was almost exclusively aimed at obtaining practical financial results and was carried on largely by blasé professionals who did not share in the sorrows and joys of pioneering, many of the values of the new Palestine have been degraded and cheapened beyond recognition. Among the victims of that type of propaganda was that unique creation of Zionist vision—the kvutza.

In this short study, Shalom Wurm has made an attempt to present a sober and honest picture of the community of which he has been an active partner for twenty years. He brings to his task an intimate knowledge of conditions and men, the integrity of the best type of reporter, and a mind trained by a searching study of sociological problems.

The reader will not find in this study any of the messianic claims which are so lightly made by special pleaders for our collective settlements. The kvutza, as Shalom Wurm describes it, is not a "perfect society" engineered by seekers for Eldorado. It is best understood in the context of particular social conditions within which ordinary human beings have tried to realize certain social aims, which are directly traceable to social and economic conditions and more distantly to a specific cultural heritage. The kvutza is as distinctly a product of our unique Jewish reality as the men who founded it and the Zionism which brought them to Palestine.

The youthful pioneer, preparing for his "Aliya," often visualizes the kvutza as a social Utopia which will eliminate all social problems. There, he is certain, all those difficulties which harass the socially-sensitive individual in capitalist society will vanish almost automatically. With private property abolished and the corrupting economic incentives removed, all those appetites and passions which poison and distort social relations in the acquisitive society will disappear. The kvutza is a rational society, and as such a community where authority and compromise, discipline and self-discipline, in fact even moral choice itself, will no longer have any functional justification.

This study of the organization of the collectivist community in Palestine is guided by the premise that there are perennial social

problems which reappear in diverse forms in all human societies. Such perennial problems are the quest for the proper harmony between the claims of the society and the inviolable rights of the individual, the place and obligations of leadership, the relation between church and state (in the kvutza—between ideology and society).

Of the achievements of the kvutza as they are summarized in this brochure one is most impressed by those in the field of colonization and social welfare. The role played by the kvutza in the establishment of a modern agricultural sector in Palestine cannot be overestimated. It is clear that without the kvutza we would not have in Palestine a food-producing Jewish farm population. Here only the blind or hopelessly prejudiced will fail to appreciate the constructive role of the collectivist effort.

The kvutza has also proved an unquestionable success as a community providing for the economic adjustment and social welfare of progressively-minded European immigrants in a neglected country in the process of colonization. The individual efforts of the thousands who now live and work in the kvutza could not have provided them with the working conditions, security and the comforts which they enjoy as a result of collective initiative.

There remains the problem of the kvutza as a *socialist* community. About this aspect of collective settlement Shalom Wurm speaks with a scrupulous caution which does credit not only to him but to the kvutza itself. As an experiment in socialist community building the kvutza faces two grave problems. One is the secular equivalent of the relation between church and state—in this case between ideology and community. The other is the problem of leadership.

The first problem is posed by those in the kvutza movement who maintain that in order to survive and justify its existence (from what they believe to be a socialist point of view), the kvutza must be more than a form of association limited to the sharing of work and its products. The collectivism of the kvutza, it is insisted, must also include "ideology." If this point of view were to be universally accepted by all kibutzim (as it is already by some), membership would depend not only upon loyal observance of one's duties as a producer and citizen, but also on an acceptance of a certain philosophical doctrine (dialectical materialism or, say, Kantian idealism), a sociological dogma (the class struggle or national solidarity as the

sole determining factor in history), a positive or negative attitude toward the Soviet Union, etc., etc.

It is not too early to inquire whether such tendencies do not indicate the emergence of an attitude that may be called "kvutza totalitarianism." It is obvious that if "ideological collectivism" were to be accepted the kvutza would very quickly be transformed from an open community of men who are united by a self-imposed discipline of clearly defined duties and rights into a pseudo-religious sect, which must ultimately die of intellectual sterility caused by uniformity.

The problem of leadership in the kvutza is treated in this study with a detachment which is rare in kvutza literature. Shalom Wurm is concerned with the role of non-economic ambitions and privileges in the collectivist community. With fine psychological insight he points to the dangers which a certain type of facile eloquence may carry within itself for the kvutza as a democratic community. He believes that the task of those who show concern for the democratic character of the kvutza is to fight for the preservation of its original, town-meeting forms of administration. To achieve this end, means of control must be created. Reliance on the good will and good nature of the member is not sufficient in a growing community with its inevitable division of functions.

Despite this realistic approach, Shalom Wurm retains an unshaken faith in the future of the collective settlements and imbues the reader with his own optimism. In this open-eyed, sober faith the author of the study follows the best tradition of the Palestine labor movement. I cannot think of a higher tribute to a Zionist writer or educator.

SHLOMO GRODZENSKY.

I. From Amana to Daganian

In the midst of world conflict and turmoil, we have almost forgotten that for generations ceaseless endeavors have been made to create a better society that would eliminate the cruelty and horrors of war and exploitation. One of the most fruitful grounds for the numerous experiments in devising wiser ways of life has been the American continent. Since the latter part of the 18th century until fairly recent times, communes of one type or another have flourished here, some religious, some secular.

There is no wonder that of all the communes, two should stand out: the Amana colonies, and the Dukhobor settlements. Of all the communist islands on this continent, these have survived the longest: Amana existed from 1842 to 1930, and the Dukhobors are still struggling for life. Definite sociological factors have caused the religious colonies to survive much longer than the secular, for the deep idealism which existed in both seems to have survived external influences and inner disagreements much better when religion acted as a welding and protecting force.

In effect, most of the communes, both the religious and the secular, were even at their peak only living monuments to movements whose backs were broken in Europe. A violent upheaval, like the burst of a volcano, brought bearers of the eternal ideal of human freedom and of a just society to this country. Beginning with the communes of Rapp, the German peasant from Wittenberg, ("Harmony" and "Economy"), and ending with "Amana" whose inhabitants came from Hessen, the settlers were driven out of Europe because of their beliefs. The sects came not as immigrants, but as torch-bearers, whose aim it was to attempt anew here what ended in failure in the Old World.

Yet it is interesting to note that neither the sect of Rapp nor the sect of the "True Inspiration" in Amana came to this country with the idea of setting up complete communes. The sect of "True Inspiration" which believed in the continual revival of the inspiration of the Christian saints, suffered from a long chain of persecutions for about 150 years, until it seemed that it was dying as its members dispersed all over Switzerland and Holland in the 17th

century. Later it rallied its forces, settled in Hessen—then among the most liberal of the German province-states,—and slowly turned from a loose sect into an organized church. When they came to America in 1842 under the leadership of Metz, a powerful personality—they had in mind to conform to the teachings of one of their early founders: communal production and individual consumption. But as soon as they got the land, they perceived a source of inequality since different individuals invested varying sums and so benefitted unequally. Then they decided to turn to outright communism.

They had an experience in semi-communal living even back in Hessen where they built a village that was to draw its livelihood from a weaving factory. But in America they turned immediately to agriculture, under the influence of the Bible which is permeated with the spirit of the soil. Even the names they used showed the influence of the Old Testament. They first settled in Erie County, near Buffalo, founded six villages there and called the settlement "Ebenezer" after a verse in the First Book of Samuel (VII, 12): "Then Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped me."

For twelve years they lived in Ebenezer. The chronicle of the commune tells only half the story when it relates that they had to move in a hurry in search of bigger living quarters as the sect grew in numbers. There was another reason, too. One of the slogans of the sect was: "Do not waste words on your neighbors. Conclude your business with them as rapidly as possible." But in the vicinity of Ebenezer Buffalo was rapidly developing into a metropolis, a serious threat to the segregation which the sect so vigorously sought. Consequently they moved to the open spaces of Iowa where capitalist civilization had not yet reached.

In this removal we note a close parallel to the history of Harmony, founded by Rapp. When the colony achieved a high economic standard, Rapp sold it to Owen for fear that the favorable economic circumstances would destroy the religious principles of the community. He left the place which was built up with great pioneering effort and moved West only to return later to another place in Pennsylvania. This constant migration of the communes, often into the Wild West, in the middle of the 19th century, bears witness to their fear of the influence of capitalist civilization. The commune could thrive only in an uncomplicated, pre-capitalist environment.

The name which the members of the Community of True Inspiration gave to their second settlement bears witness to the fact that there they felt much safer than in their first abode. As against Ebenezer, ("Hitherto hath the Lord helped me") which testifies to a feeling of instability, they called their new home "Amana", meaning a "sure covenant", or as worded in Nehemiah, (X, 1) "Behold we are servants for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers. And it yielded much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins: also they have dominion over our bodies and our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress. And because of all this we make a sure covenant and write it."

A long tradition of disagreement with the opportunist tendencies of Protestantism and the strong authority of the leader helped to preserve the distinct character of Amana, even to the extent of strict adherence to the German language amidst an English-speaking environment for almost a hundred years. The place of the leader in the community will also help explain the fact that, unlike the communes based on the principle of absolute equality, most affairs of Amana were managed by a small group of specially appointed individuals. There was a noticeable aversion to too many meetings, too much democracy and popular control over the affairs of the commune, for fear that the leaders' authority would be shattered.

The historian of Amana gives a different reason for the tendency to refrain from too much social contact: "If Amana has made a distinctive contribution to practical working communism," he states, "it is in the combination or rather the nice adjustment between separatism and communism, whereby mutual interest is maintained without inviting the pitfall of too much getting together." In other words, to avoid sin, avoid your neighbors.

This particular form of social hygiene was made possible by the special constitution of Amana which, while democratic, gave greater weight in formulating decisions to the older members in accordance with biblical teachings (note the similarity to the preferred position of the older people of the community in the Utopia of More and the social code of Morelly). This constitutional point did help preserve unity in Amana for many years, in contrast to the communes based completely on the equalitarian principle where the inner con-

flicts were often a result of a bitter revolt against the domination of the older members, conducted by the young in the name of absolute equality.

The history of American communes has demonstrated conclusively that all the communes whose central idea was the principle of absolute equality, broke down very rapidly, whether or not they included in their social set-up the cult of the leader, whether they were elected democratically or not. Apparently, the ideal of equality alone is not sufficient to build a commune. The *central idea* of the religious communes, which were as a rule much more successful, was not equality. Equality was at best a side issue. Only when the religious basis was losing its hold because of various external conditions—such as the influence of capitalist civilization—was the principle of equality moved into a central position.

The principle of equality usually became a source of difficulty when the communes reached a position of comparative prosperity and wealth. In the secular communes, idealism and devotion to the interests of the group were preserved intact in the period of construction when a great pioneering effort was necessary. As soon as the pioneering hardships were relaxed, as the economic position of the commune improved, the weakness of equalitarianism as the central idea became apparent. Thus, for an example, Robert Owen's New Harmony, purchased from Rapp as an established settlement, was very short-lived. The principle of equality would lead to quarrels over pennies and would bring out the petty side of human nature, to the detriment of any remnant of social idealism. In addition, equality as an abstract ideal of social justice gave way to a conception that material equality would insure an equal share of happiness to all. This, of course, inevitably gave rise to difficulties, for what was happiness for one was not necessarily happiness for the other.

Another drawback of the communes was their failure to assign to physical labor its due role in the new ethics. Labor was usually taken for granted, but it never became one of the basic principles or aims. (In fact, labor—side by side with profit—became one of the ethical principles of the then rising capitalist society.) If the members of the communes did come to America to till the soil, it was because they came in quest of happiness which had eluded them in the Old World. The principle of equal sharing of labor, like the principle of equality itself, constituted the basis of a commune only

as long as it was imbued with a higher ideal. As soon as that ideal evaporated, all ideals of equality could not prevent the commune from breaking down.

In the Dukhobor community the principle of leadership became so central as to develop a dynasty. The basic disease of political Communism, the disease of placing the leader before and above the idea, left its stamp on some of the American communes. Here is evidence of how an idea becomes inseparable from its leader and even his offspring though he may be totally unworthy, as was the case with Peter, the son of the venerated Dukhobor leader, Peter Verigin. Here, too, is evidence of the danger which arises when an idea is turned into a cult, which permits its leaders to play havoc with the lives of its humble followers and supposed beneficiaries.

Neither equalitarianism, nor blind admiration for the leader by themselves will bring about a just society, based on material and spiritual collectivism. "Has anything remained in the ether about us of the energy expended on the building of the communist cells?" is a question that serves as a warning and a lesson. Neither the quest for individual and group happiness in a segregated sect, nor the blind cult of a leader will show the way toward the building of a new society for the masses in town and country.

The members of Amana and of other religious sects came to this continent armed with noble ideals, not necessarily associated with the principle of communal life. The objective conditions, plus the integrating elements inherent in their ideals, led them to build, empirically, communist cells. (An exception were the communities of the Moravian Brothers whose traditions were collectivist even in the days when they were persecuted by the Catholic Church in Central Europe.) They drew their social idealism from the ancient Hebrew humanism of the Bible. Communism in itself was not their final goal. Their communism was more dependent on their sectarian religion, than their religion on communal living. When the humanist ideals, bound up with their religious convictions, lost their hold, the communist form of life was not strong enough to resist the tide of outside influences.

Whatever be the opinions about the various sources of energy of the Kibutz movement in Palestine, it cannot be denied that it derives its perseverance and its pioneer enthusiasm from the ancient

source of Hebrew humanism. Its deep awareness of the social problem of our time, its constant concern for the fate of the nation and its great share in bearing the responsibility for the nation's resistance, clearly demonstrate that its communal form of living serves it as the most suitable and most desirable means of realizing its great social ideals, but not as the final goal.

2. The Urge Toward Collectivism

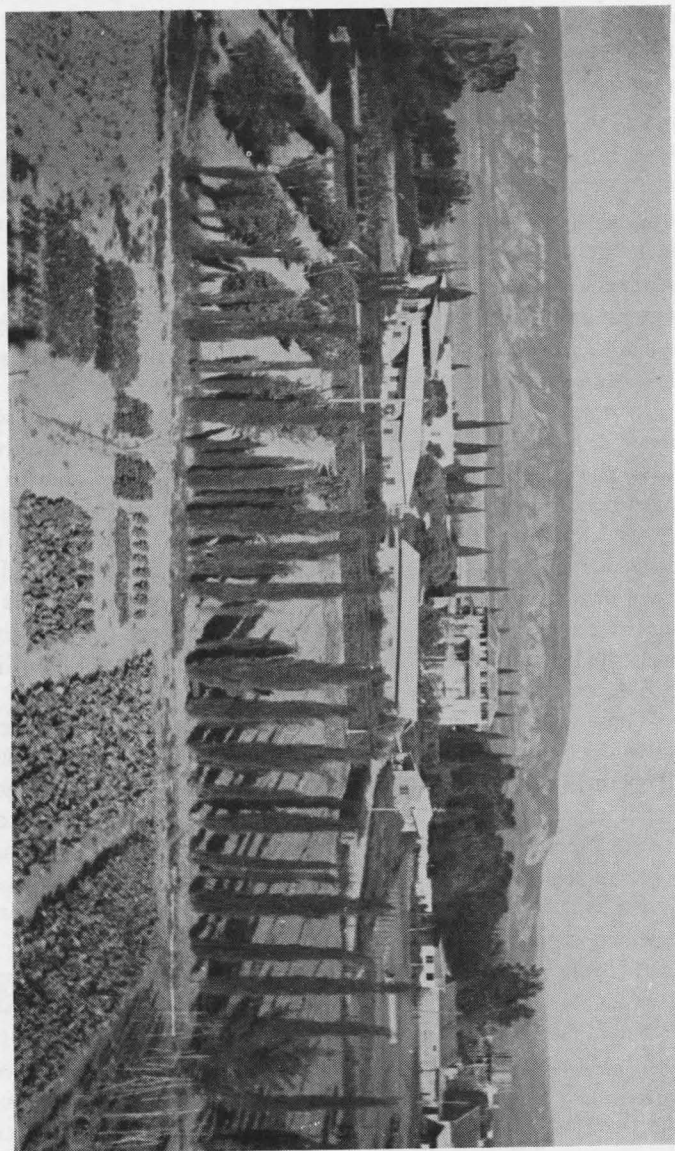
How shall we explain the fact that, despite the ominous predictions of so many economists, the kvutza in Palestine has not only survived, but also flourishes both socially and economically, playing the most important role in the Palestinian labor movement and in Zionism as a whole? Let us not forget that it was not only opponents of the Palestine labor movement who often criticised the kvutza and predicted its quick deterioration. Even theoreticians of the labor movement itself very often tried to prove, by using all manner of ingenious interpretations of labor doctrine, that a collective way of life within a capitalist economy is a mere dream.

It is well known that in the socialist movement there was widespread unfavorable opinion of social experiments in collectivism within the framework of capitalism. Men like Kautsky and his disciples believed such experiments to be merely a way of distracting the working-class from its real task by diverting it from the daily political and economic struggle. They cited, as most striking evidence of the impossibility of the collective, the failure of the religious and the Utopian-socialist communities which were created, mainly in the United States, in the 19th century. These had been short-lived, the oldest surviving only a few decades.

Those who are familiar with the unfortunate history of those collective experiments and who know of the kvutza only from hearsay, will perhaps be inclined to consider the kvutza as a temporary social phenomenon conditioned by the specific circumstances of development in Palestine in the last three decades. They may assume that as soon as a relative stability of the political status of the Jews in that country is achieved, and an economically healthy Jewish population is created, the kvutza may collapse.

It cannot be denied that the kvutza owes its existence to the specific needs of Palestine, where the Jews have the two-fold task of creating a nation which must subsist on its own labor, and of defending its achievements against a hostile environment. Even without a complicated sociological analysis it should be obvious that certain objective factors forced the newcomers to introduce elements of

MOTHER OF KVUTZOT: Daganah, established in 1910, reaps the fruit of three decades of pioneering toil.



cooperation in their lives. These newcomers encountered utterly strange conditions, a new language and new ways of earning a living. Furthermore, they envisioned a society aimed mainly at the creation of possibilities for absorption of large-scale immigration and for profitable absorption of those already there. Under these circumstances one can understand the extraordinary cohesion created by a community united by emotional and ideological bonds. The recognition of these social and national conditions encountered by the Jewish immigrants in Palestine is necessary but does not exhaust all the factors which operate in the kvutza, inspiring its individuals to dedicate their entire lives and their deepest hopes to this way of life—the way of life of the cooperative commonwealth in the making.

Moreover, the number of kvutzot in Palestine is increasing from year to year, and today these occupy an important position in the social and economic life of the country. Especially during these recent years of economic and political crisis in Palestine have the kvutzot proven to be the most successful single element in advancing the practical aspects of Jewish colonization and in strengthening the national position of the Jewish commonwealth.

No one will, of course, guarantee that the kvutza is an enduring social group. However, looking at its development since the founding of the first kvutza, Daganah, one may observe a continual advancement and progress in its social life and in its economy. This, in itself, is a promise of a long future, justified in many respects by the achievements of the collective in Palestine as contrasted with unfortunate experiences in this way of life in the past and in other places. The success of the kvutza gives courage to new generations to continue the work of their fathers.

The strong influence exercised by the kvutza on Jewish youth, almost without regard to differences of political creed, is due to the fact that the kvutza, as a social form, appealed to the specific mentality of sons of Jewish middle-class people. In contradistinction to the American collective communities, the Palestinian kvutza was not created along the pattern of some preconceived social idea. Of course, the founders of the first kvutzot, in the first decade of this century, came from the revolutionary-minded Jewish youth of Russia who were inspired by social ideals which gave them the stimulus for living

a collective life. Actually, these young people had only very vague ideas of how to adjust themselves to their new country. In fact, the kvutza was perhaps born of a huddling together of bewildered idealists, rather than a positive understanding of the cooperative community. As evidence of this, let us quote a few sentences from the first Almanac of the kvutza: "It is to be doubted whether it was clear to the members of the kvutzot, at the beginning of their collective career, just what their aim was. It was an instinctive longing for a way without a paved path. As you went along, you had to pave every step ahead."

Who were they, who, evidently knowing of the failure of the American communes and other similar experiments, had courage to try again? They came, not from industrial occupations, not from the ranks of the urban proletariat, but from the relatively independent Jewish middle-class which, though persecuted, was always anxious to retain personal independence in economic life. The non-conformist mentality which they brought with them was undoubtedly in some measure responsible for the choice of the cooperative way of life.

In the above-mentioned Almanac we find, in another chapter, the following explanation of the causes which contributed in a considerable degree to the rise of the kvutza: "We were imbued with a desire to find new forms of life in which we would be left to work independently, without bosses and overseers—to work for ourselves and not for others." Those were the words of Yosef Bussel, the founder of the first kvutza. They are characteristic not only of the Second Aliya, but also of the later generations. They are re-echoed in the words of the Fifth Aliya in 1928: "The kvutza relieves its members of the humiliation of having to flatter the boss or the landlord and bolsters their morale. We do not want to create masses of a proletariat bred in factories and basements, but men free in their work and in their community life."

These young, revolutionary Jews who came to Palestine were forced to become wage-earners in the established agricultural colonies. Aware of the social (and economic) disadvantages connected with this necessity they looked for a way of adjustment to the economic needs of the country without risking their personal and moral independence. The uninspiring prospect of remaining an agricultural wage-earner all his life urged each to seek and find a way of life which would make this both possible and desirable, socially and economic-

ally, personally and nationally. This consideration, together with the spirit of building a new national life, by which almost every generation of chalutzim is inspired, constitutes the basis of the kvutza. We can understand the necessity of mutual help and cooperation between chalutzim only when we deeply appreciate how much of a personal revolution their immigration to Palestine was for them. For most of them it was not only transition from urban to rural life, from almost exclusively intellectual to physical pursuits, but also a change of language and environment. Almost all of them were inexperienced in agriculture, an occupation inconceivable without a long tradition.

Finally, the spiritual needs of this type of young man, who came mostly with a high cultural standard and not seldom with a higher education, demanded a form of life in which the individual would not become a slave of his material needs. In the kvutza, based as it is on a diversified division of labor and apportionment of functions, there was room, impossible elsewhere, for leisure and the pursuit of cultural interests. Even though in recent years the social composition of the kvutza is less homogeneous than it was, the kvutza continues to be a group phenomenon which answers a very real social need.

3. Some Elements of Social Cohesion

The question of whether the social ideal or the national ideal contributed more to the rise of the kvutza is reminiscent of the question about the chicken and the egg and is probably no more pertinent. The kvutza was the specific creation of pioneers who could make progress only through group efforts. Had they not evolved the cooperative community it is likely they would have faced the fate of the earlier pioneers. Healthy intuition, not preconceived ideas, led the Palestinian worker to this solution of his problems. It was the spirit of idealism, and not ideological dogmas, which gave him the courage to carry on.

The obstacles in the path of the Palestinian settlers were great in the past and are great today. They are as unable to overcome them individually as they are able to master them collectively. It is on this account that, in spite of the relative backwardness of the country, and the competition of cheap Oriental labor, the Jewish worker has succeeded in creating a strong labor organization and a sound cooperative economy.

The kvutza made possible the struggle of the pioneer for opportunities of work and security. When all his attempts to gain a foothold in the village or the town seemed to fail, the Jewish worker turned to the kvutza. Everywhere he found that he had to associate with others and to form groups because he was powerless alone. One of his primary needs was a community kitchen where the poorly paid worker (who was also often unemployed because of the seasonal nature of agriculture) could get cheap meals and credit. Then, too, there were the frequent illnesses which harassed him in the difficult climate to which he was utterly unaccustomed. Above all, there was the overpowering feeling of helpless loneliness, which was his lot after he left his relatively easy life to work in a strange, difficult land, and also severed all links with his family. He had lost the intimacy of a familiar environment and had thrown himself into a new and insecure life. Despite the heroism of many, they could not endure this plight separately and alone. Even when work was regular, the very low wages were by no means sufficient to make any

kind of family life possible. The Palestinian worker was forced to become a migrant uncertain of the morrow.

The kvutza was, after a time, able to assume the role of an economic entrepreneur. In other words, the Palestinian workers were building their own economy. In the open labor market a similar situation existed. Groups of workers were able to obtain what individuals would have found impossible. When Jewish laborers failed to hold their own in the open labor market, they could bargain for a labor contract. This is to say, that the workers would not be paid for time put in but for an entire project of work which the contract covered. "The two elements characteristic of the Palestine labor movement have been the tendency to labor contracts and the association of individual workers into work groups. These two tendencies are bound up with one another. They aim at one of the two: either an increase in productivity or a decrease in the costs of living." (Tabenkin)

It is generally conceded that labor contracts serve mostly as a means of the grossest exploitation of the worker. This is especially true in the unskilled categories. The work in the orange plantations was chiefly of the unskilled variety. However, in Palestine, labor contracts very often served as a means of raising the material standards of the worker and not as an instrument of exploitation. The average Jewish worker was locked out, among other things, by his inability to compete with the Arab who was able to subsist on an incredibly low level. A group of workers were able to take on large and ambitious projects which individual workers could not have done. The cooperative organization of the work increased its productivity. Part of the increase in productivity was due to the very nature of cooperative enterprise, part was due to the possibility of purposeful task-division. The weaker and less skilled individuals were thus enabled to persevere in the work and to secure economic equality. Therefore, in many cases, the worker was actually able to raise his wage-standard by means of labor contracts, European Socialist dogma notwithstanding. This system had one final advantage. It spared the worker any actual contact with his employer. He was responsible only to his own representatives. He was, therefore, able to work on his own responsibility and with a feeling of independence.

In the final analysis, it was the cooperative lesson of the labor-

contract groups which was a living demonstration to the Palestinian worker that only collectively was he able to find security. The labor group plus the social ideals by which the pioneers were and are inspired, gave birth to the kvutza. The chalutz, with his social ideals and values, could hardly be expected to be inspired by the prospect of remaining a wage-earner all his life. Wage-earners, experiencing the benefits of cooperation, would naturally try to perpetuate their profitable association as colonization groups. The success of these groups was followed naturally, by settling on land and building farms managed by the workers themselves.

In his *Our Platform*, Dov Ber Borochoy writes of the adaptability of the Jew to agricultural work:—"It is true that the Jews can make a determined attempt to engage in farming, but such attempts are doomed to failure . . . city-bred people, the Jews are unable to compete with Italian and other peasants who have an agricultural background. The geographical location is unimportant . . . The country into which Jews will immigrate will not be industrial nor predominantly agricultural, but rather semi-agricultural."

While Borochoy's contention proved to be true as far as the semi-agricultural economic character of Jewish colonization of Palestine is concerned, he did not foresee the miracle of chalutzit which converted a city-bred people into an agricultural class deeply rooted in the soil of the Jordan Valley, Emek Yizreel, and the length and breadth of the country. This wonder could have been accomplished not by wandering masses of proletarians, competing among themselves, but only by the kvutza, the creation of which pre-supposed a specific type of Jewish youth which has learned to sublimate economic needs and to convert necessities into opportunities. The idea of creating new forms of community-life was possible only because of the idealism which could do the impossible.

What urged the pioneers to turn to collective farming was their understanding of the fact that agriculture would not support them if it was pursued in the same manner found in the old colonies. Built by philanthropy in the last decades of the 19th century, these colonies failed because they were demoralized by bureaucratic managers and overseers. In spite of huge sums invested in them, these colonies had failed to rise above the level of the miserably primitive farm of the Arab fellah. Finally, many of the colonists had forgotten the ideal, which brought them to Palestine. Their chil-

dren very often left the country with a cynicism resulting from the discrepancy between the ideal and the real. The creators of the kvutza realized that they could succeed only by rationalizing agriculture. To compete in the open market with mass-produced commodities, possible only by using the most advanced methods of agriculture, was their only weapon against the competition of cheap labor.

The creation of the kvutza was made possible, in addition, by the fact that the Zionist Organization had acquired tracts of land and had no candidates for settlement. There were only the pioneers who, though inexperienced in agriculture, had the necessary idealistic drive to make the transition from urban to rural living. Further, the high intellectual qualities of the settlers (let us remember that they were not adventurers or fortune-hunters, but men driven to realize an ideal) enabled them to modernize their agricultural methods. Thus it was that the principle of collectivism advanced hand in hand with the rise of the agricultural worker.

Dr. Ruppin, who contributed a great deal to the creation of collective settlements, writes in his *Three Decades of Palestine* that the kvutza may be looked upon as the birthplace of the agricultural worker. Today many expert agriculturists live in *moshavim*.^{*} They would, however, never have become expert farmers had they not undergone the training of the kvutza, with its diversified collective farming and its scientific approach to the cultivation of the land.

As a matter of fact, smallholders' settlements often adopt the cooperative pattern in the initial stages of their development before the final allotment of individual parcels of land. Even then certain elements of cooperation are retained.

^{*} Moshav—Cooperative smallholders' village.

4. The Ethos of Work

In contrast with other collectivist adventures—especially those which took place in the Western Hemisphere in the nineteenth century—labor is the corner-stone of the kvutza, labor not only as a means but also as a value. Although the communes of America subsisted on physical labor, they did not consider it as the mainspring of their collective endeavor. Spiritual and temporal happiness were the essential motives. Labor was no novelty to them—they had been engaged in it and had not been deprived of it. If they chose a life of agriculture it was because this seemed to be the most suitable way to realize the collectivist aim. Their social ideals, in a world of capitalist competition, necessitated a measure of segregation, far removed from the rising cities. The vast uncultivated areas offered many opportunities for agricultural settlement and it was quite natural, at least in the first stages of their development, that the communes devote themselves to agricultural work.

To the kvutza labor became "religion." Labor was a necessity and an ideal. It represented a national revolution as well as a national renaissance. The early literature of the Palestine labor movement is permeated with the glorification of labor. The entire teaching of A. D. Gordon revolves almost mystically around labor. His doctrine has become an essential spiritual good of the Palestine labor movement and has been called—sometimes with an undertone of faint irony—"the religion of labor" (*dat ha'avoda*).

This mentality was not found among the first colonists who settled in Palestine in the last two decades of the 19th century. These had comfortably allowed the Zionist ideal of national normalcy to fall into desuetude. The first founders of the kvutza, however, were dominated by a mentality which made them attach great significance to the very idea of labor. This view dates from the Second Aliya, which, according to Berl Katzenelson, came into the country in a spirit of rebellion. This rebellion was not in the nature of a political or ideological fermentation; it was a personal revolt. They were in revolt against Jewish passivity and submission. They were in revolt against the Jewish economic structure, against cultural and

spiritual resignation, against docile submission. This was indeed a revolt of the Jew against himself, against his character and attitude towards himself, which was the result of acquiescence and resignation to the Galut (*diaspora*).

The pioneer of the Second Aliya found disappointment on every hand. To be sure he found "colonies and peasants" but not "in the fields or engaged in manual labor. We found them riding on donkeys, supervising their workers. And they too were few," writes one of the first founders of Dagonia, Tanhum. "We found there the Jewish colony, with its capitalistic features more marked than those of the town from which we came in the Galut, to be anti-Zionist and inhumane." (Tabenkin). It was anti-Zionist because it did not and would not employ Jewish workers when it could exploit the cheap Arab labor. It was barring the way to increased Jewish immigration by standing in the way of Jewish employment.

This situation only seemed to strengthen the conviction in the pioneers that their attitude toward labor was the only realistic one. Their attitude arose from the realization that if they were to transform the social and economic life of the settler, it could only be done by the Jew working his own soil. It became a national task—for only so could they root themselves in the country and make it their own. They began to see that real ownership is conferred only upon the hands that create. One of them gave the following description of his attitude towards labor: "There may be two kinds of relationship between a man and a picture—the relationship of the man who bought the picture and the relationship of the man who painted the picture. If the relationship between the individual and the revival of his nation be similar to that existing between the picture and its buyer, then it is sterile. The relationship must be the creative relationship of the artist."

It is immediately clear that such an attitude cannot be expected from the so-called proletarian who is deprived of the most elementary right to enjoy the actual fruits of his toil and to stand in direct personal relationship to what he creates. He is brought into such a relationship only in "independent farming, with the worker fully responsible for production, independent of owners and superintendents." (Tanhum) But it is quite natural that this relationship should be more easily achieved in agriculture, "the mother of all trades and occupations," with its diversity of tasks. The successful conquest of

labor seemed possible through the agricultural cooperative. Thus the ideas of labor and of the collective became inseparably fused.

The kvutza was severely attacked by many Palestinian workers who were burdened with proletarian dogma—in recent times by the Left Poale Zion—and believed that the task of workers is to remain wage-earners, pure and simple. They feared that the kvutza would divert the attention of the proletariat from this primary mission. Only the great success of the kvutzot in the last decade has caused them to change their attitude.

The fervid adherence to the ideal of labor gave rise to a peculiar puritanism which exists in some kvutzot to this day. This puritanism consisted of indiscriminate rejection of anything that had the appearance of business or bargaining. Before the first World War certain kvutzot in the Jordan Valley devoted themselves solely to the cultivation of cereals, ignoring plantations which seemed to hold forth the temptation of profit. They saw before them the spectre of the Judean orange-grower, who to them seemed both an exploiter and betrayer of the cause. Thus it was that many kvutzot rejected the opportunity of engaging in a more rounded agricultural program, and stubbornly clung to the plow and the harvester. This puritanism is reflected even today in the refusal of kvutzot to employ seasonal contract labor—a thing which smacks to them of exploitation.

The idealization of labor was complemented by the cosmic conception of A. D. Gordon, who saw the emancipation of the Jew as the return to nature through labor. Gordon sought a compromise between intellectual and physical labor by synthesizing them in agriculture: "It is necessary to do away with the situation in which spiritual creation is the vested interest of the few. Spiritual creation will become more fruitful through direct contact with nature, technology, etc." Gordon, though not an avowed adherent of the kvutza, lived in one for many years. It is further evident that his concept of the synthetic worker-intellectual could find fertile ground in a collective community. This puritanism of the labor-enthusiast sometimes assumed a taint of fanaticism. In one of his letters, written in 1919, Yosef Bussel, the founder of Dagan, tells of some of the rank-and-file of the kvutza who looked at their leaders with disdain because they sometimes did other than manual labor. This attitude, he said, was caused not by envy, but by devotion to the deep ethos with which they had endowed physical labor.

It is worthy of note that, while the kvutza and the Palestinian labor movement were rising to a new evaluation of labor, poets and writers of Europe were writing accusingly of the conversion of free people into slaves of machines. The glorification of labor in Palestine was possible only because the worker was learning to regard his work as his particular form of creation. "The labor movement in the world does not see the ethical value of labor because the worker is only made to suffer by it. We regard labor as a positive value. The English worker is stifled by it; to us it is a source of creative joy." (Tabenkin)

In the above-mentioned letter of Bussel, he points out that there is a category of people in the kvutzot "who unwittingly are striving to make of work an artistic creation," thus to do away with the soullessness of labor.

It would be wrong to assume that this mental attitude was motivated by a romantic desire for a bucolic idyl in the lap of nature. Those who created the kvutza had an early taste of the worm-wood of disappointment and denial. In the first Almanac of the kvutzot, which appeared in 1926, there are the following sentences written by a young member of a kvutza: "We do not seek idyllic peace in agriculture. Our eyes were opened when we worked as individual workers. We have become saturated with the sense of the shame of Jewish existence. Thanks to that sense of shame and to the sense of justice which demands that every man must work, we have been able to win the battle of adjustment."

These words epitomize the synthesis of idealism and realism. Their reconciliation in the creative work of the kvutza constitutes its labor ethos.

5. The Mission of the Kvutza

Originally the kvutza was an instrument for the conquest of labor. Its growth destined it to become, in addition, a major instrument for agricultural settlement. These are the two supports upon which the kvutza rests. These are also the two cardinal objectives of every chalutz. In general, perhaps only a small number of the pioneers who had decided to devote themselves to agriculture acquiesced in the idea of remaining wage-earners. Significantly, the kvutza, although it developed empirically and not according to a preconceived plan, continued to extend the sphere of its tasks and its ideological horizon. Though a certain amount of realism, born of their experiences as individual workers on the backward farms of the narrow-minded first colonists, still dominated them, the chalutzim of the Second Aliya were moved by the stirring ideal of human and national redemption.

"The new country demanded a recasting of character. Certain personality traits which were once considered important, giving one special status, ceased to count under the new circumstances. As a result many ceased to try to utilize special talents, asking, 'What opportunities are there after all in so small a country?'" Thus Berl Katzenelson characterized the people of the Second Aliya. The kvutza, however, could greatly alleviate the difficulties attendant upon acclimatization. In a sense, the feeling of "belonging" was able to tide one over the difficult period. In this respect the kvutza served and still serves as a "safety deposit box of idealism."

That perplexity attending change of condition and position was not characteristic of the Palestinian pioneers alone. This must happen in every new country where the newcomer is overwhelmed by a feeling of "alienness." Normally immigrants are forced to find their bread and are able to rise on the economic and social ladder only after a period of adjustment and accumulation of experience. The kvutza was able to prevent the transition of the worker to the employer class. It tied the individual to his life of labor. The kvutza, then, became an instrument in the prevention of "deproletarianization."

There were still other values inspired by the kvutza. Its builders

envisioned a new society which they were perhaps unable to define in customarily accepted terminology. In the publications and periodicals of the kvutza movement there are to be found terms like: "A new family based not on blood, but on spiritual bonds," etc. Some of those expressions reveal an almost mystical yearning for a new community, based on the brotherhood of man.

Every ethical system is in danger of falling prey to realities and its adherents may be forced to make compromises with everyday life. In the long run the ethical ideal may lose its original features through incessant adaptation to exigencies of life or relations with the outside world. For a long time the kvutza was haunted by a feeling of anxiety in the face of the need to compromise. Had this anxiety successfully held the kvutza to a strict pattern, it would have transformed the collective movement into a small sect.

A man like Zvi Shatz found an analogy with the time preceding the destruction of the Second Temple, a striking similarity between the Essenes and the modern kvutzot: "Then were created the first kvutzot, like the Essenes and their settlements on the banks of the Dead Sea. These men could remain inactive no longer. They left the city, with its plundering of the poor and the widows, its dishonest trading, its complacency, the debauchery of its tyrants. They flocked to quiet and deserted corners where no evil dwells. Are not the kvutzot the very beacons which will guide us to the New World?"

During the post-war period, when many thousands of young pioneers were flocking into Palestine giving new hope to Zionism, a similar spirit prevailed. Thus speaks one of them, possessed of the same idea of Jewish rebirth by the segregation of the most devoted, who should serve as an example to the masses: "Forty generations ago life in this land was even more trying than we find it now. And there arose one who, with twelve disciples, went into the dark and emerged victorious. Miracles are not impossible. I have faith in those who love our nation with all their heart, who understand its spirit, who feel its mystery, who believe in it. They will kindle the torch" This was the expression of a young heart transported by the sight of the land that, though desolate for centuries, preserved its haunting charm. Here is longing to forge the link between the lofty ideals of the Essenes and those of the collectives. Here is the rebirth of the desire to escape the world's wickedness. Even the history of the country seems to him to be in harmony with the kvutza ideal.

In the literature of the kvutza movement from the founding of

Dagania until 1924-25 one finds, with some astonishment, that hardly a word is devoted to political ideas and ideologies. This literature is concerned with ethical and aesthetic values, the prerequisite fundamentals of national rebirth. This was certainly not because the people of the kvutzot were not politically minded. The opposite is true. It was because the kvutza was not intended to serve political purposes.

It was to be expected that the mental attitudes of the kvutzot should develop into a renunciation of urban life. This despite the fact that kvutzot were often created in the cities among groups engaged in quarrying or construction work. It may be that this aversion for urban life resulted in the introduction into the kvutzot of various industrial undertakings usually associated with the city, precisely in order to achieve a partial independence from the city. It is undoubtedly true that the idea of combining agriculture with industry in the collective arose from the will to preserve the kvutza, surrounded by an economy based on exploitation and competition. The champions of the kvutza wanted to build the economy of the collective so as to satisfy all possible needs of the group by the actual work of the group. They sought to assure security through self-sufficiency.

One may justly be astonished by the naivete of those who believed in independence from the commercial market. It is especially strange when one regards the economic dependence of the whole country, which, especially in the days following the first world war, subsisted to a great extent on citrus cultivation. The whole country was dependent on trade; how much more so the individual collective! The desire for independence is an example of an economic concept distinctly determined by a social idea. As a matter of fact, the kvutzot depended greatly on the Jewish urban market, both as producers and consumers. It was impossible for the kvutza to erect an economic wall around itself. This was basically impossible when one realizes that the kvutza was essentially an expanding unit. The collective was meant to be a part of a large social achievement. Unlike the American collective, which was dedicated to the task of bringing individual salvation to its members, the kvutza was justified by its efficacy as an instrument of Jewish mass colonization.

The kvutza is the front line in the colonization of new areas. Consequently its moral effect on the whole labor movement is of great significance. The collective movement builds cells of the new order within the Jewish community. It is, therefore, generally regarded as a vanguard and enjoys the confidence of the whole

labor movement. Members of the kvutzot frequently fill responsible positions on urban labor committees, thus forming an important link between the collective and the cities. Thus the kvutza becomes the barometer of economic and social solidarity and of the national responsibility of the labor movement as a whole.

One of the outstanding self-imposed tasks of the kvutza is its pre-occupation with extending its capacity to absorb new immigrants. This it does not only by creating economic opportunities but also by making cultural and educational facilities available to pioneer groups outside the country. Because of its intense interest in the pioneer movement in the diaspora, kvutzot have been spared from deteriorating into a closed sect of hermits seeking personal salvation.

6. Equality and Democracy

Though members of the kvutzot often place emphasis on the principle of equality—a thing more often 'honored in the breach than in the observance'—the kvutza was not conceived as a social group based on an equalitarian philosophy. Actually, equality, as a basic relation between individuals of the collective, was never anything but a concomitant of the basic kvutza idea. In everyday life emphasis was placed more on the principle of mutual help than on the principle of equality. Equality was, of course, an unquestioned principle since no one was to be allowed more than his fellow. It is, and always was, a tacit presupposition, that no individual is entitled to privileges no matter what the extent of his contribution. Since, from the outset, equality of opportunity was offered to everyone, the kvutza demanded more effort and more responsibility from those who were more capable. There was never a system of rewards for devotion and punishments for delinquency. Those who do their best may, perhaps, be entitled to a certain prestige or to admiration but to no special privileges. The concept of equality, as an equality of production and consumption, does not fit the basic idea of the kvutza: not equal reward for unequal service, but the full participation of the individual in all features of the community life, economic, social and cultural.

In the early days of the kvutza the concept of equality might have been achieved with ease. Primitive conditions, meager finances, poor equipment and lack of tradition and experience made for an equality in the lack of opportunity. In other words, equality was actually maintained not by concept but of necessity. Apart from minor exceptions, the physical opportunity for the development of individual abilities was very limited.

The first pioneers recall the heroic epoch of the kvutza with much affection in spite of the limitations that were imposed on them. Perhaps this may be attributed not only to the fact that they are conscious of having paved the way for an entirely new form of life and work but also to the fact that the personal relationships in the early collectives were rather uncomplicated. It should be remembered that the ideology of the kvutza was far behind its development and that

many customs and habits were empirically adopted before they assumed the shape of social conventions. Perhaps the direct relation between man and man, without a set of social sanctions inevitable in larger units with manifold functions, is what really rouses this affection and admiration for the past.

In its early days the organization of the kvutza could be described as direct democracy. The scope being limited, almost every individual was able to perceive and control all the activities within the narrow framework of the community. Almost everything was obvious, requiring no specialization, and almost everyone could say what should be done, and how. There was, apart from the apportionment of daily labor, almost no necessity to employ specially elected functionaries or entrust specific tasks to appointed committees. In fact, there were no tasks which the whole group could not discuss and execute. The apportionment of work was arranged immediately after supper in the dining room, in the presence of all. The kvutza more or less resembled a family circle regulated by immediate personal contacts. Social relations were direct and unrestrained by any self-imposed checks or social regulations. Despite individualist backgrounds and mental habits inherited from varied environments, the members were devoted collectivists. Though many of them experienced great disappointments, over their own or someone else's inability to carry on, they clung, by and large, to their task, with a singleness of purpose which enabled them to endure great difficulties.

As in childhood, when the individual has not yet become aware of his limitations and has not yet learned the pressure of necessity and hard reality, the pioneers of the kvutza did not impose limits or norms on their individual and social behavior. This naivete was particularly evident among the women. Their enthusiasm for the new life and the new opportunities made them disregard their specific disabilities as regards hard physical labor. Many did physical jobs entirely above their strength. Many of them wanted to be a match for the men, thus demonstrating their independence and equality. This behavior, basically erroneous though it was, may, even so, account for the perfect social, intellectual, and physical equality which they enjoy today. Traces of this feminist extremism are still to be found among newcomers who follow in the steps of their predecessors.

The small scope of the community, the more or less uniform type of work and the lack of functionaries may account for the spontan-

eous democracy of these early kvutzot. With development and consequent diversification, the kvutza was later forced to rationalize, to a degree, its general conduct, and to fix norms of behavior.

The spontaneous form of democracy, as it obtained in the first groups, existed as long as the kvutza was occupied chiefly with the cultivation of cereals. The efficiency of the group was dependent upon the capability and responsibility of the individual and not upon an efficient organization. This approach, emphasizing personal integrity, found its expression even in the absence of regulations about working hours. In the older kvutzot (particularly in Daganian, the mother of kvutzot) for many years there was not even anything like a bell to regulate labor hours. It was believed that a bell was an insult to the sense of responsibility and dignity of the individual.

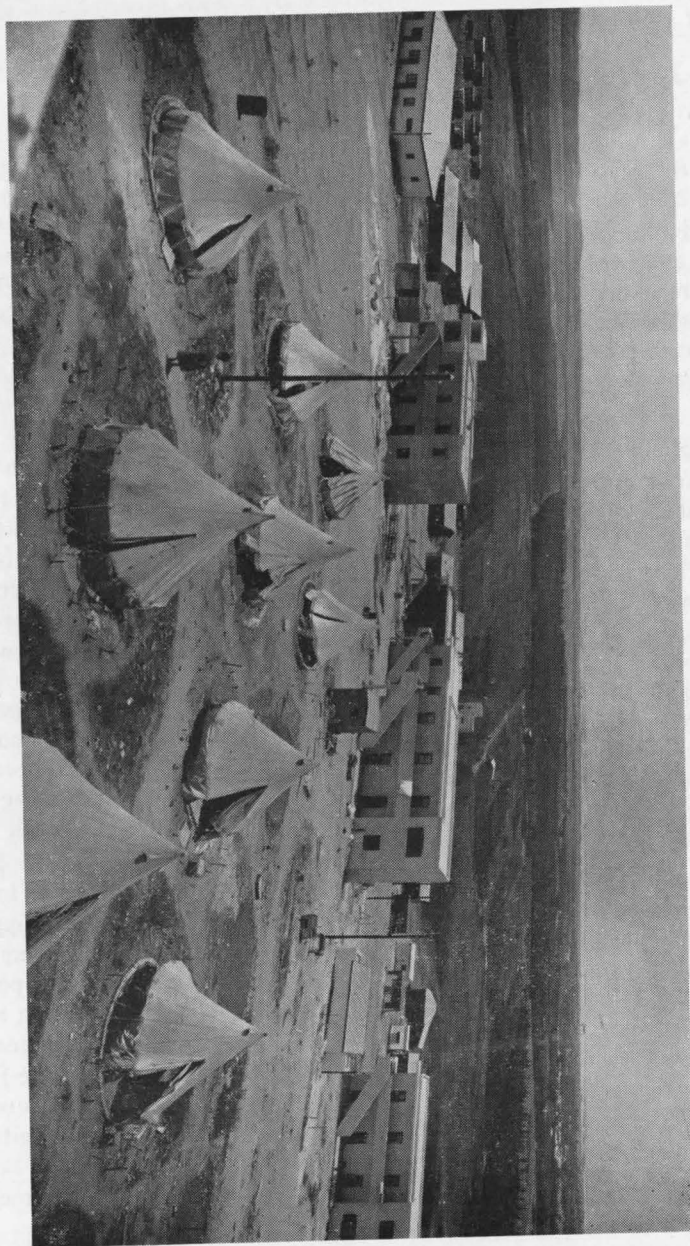
7. The Trials of Transition

With the emergence of larger collective units in Palestine after the World War the kvutza underwent a thorough change. Labor conditions at the time favored the rise of larger units. New road-building projects gave employment to thousands of people, and groups of a hundred or more people were established. Since work in roadbuilding requires precise collaboration of many people and, in this case, responsibility to a government-employer under a time contract, it was incumbent upon the work groups to organize on a strict administrative basis.

This became true not only of work but even of social life. The group could no longer rely solely upon the voluntary devotion and responsibility of the individual but was forced to adopt a measure of social regulation in order to avoid anarchy and to secure full cooperation. The very nature of the work required a diversity of functions and a close collaboration between various activities. Groups were divided into sub-groups. Each sub-group was headed by responsible people who were necessary in order to see that the work of the group conform to the activity of the whole unit. The changes, occurring as a result of an increase in the size of the group, required a more centralized management and, therefore, a thorough-going change in the constitution of the kvutza. It now became necessary to charge functionaries with the task of coordinating all kinds of work and to establish a committee responsible for all the activities.

It is clear that under these circumstances the old intimate form of labor division could no longer function. The system of "rugged individualism" whereby a man could find himself a corner where he could work efficiently was abolished by the exigencies of a type of work requiring discipline and organization. This new situation also changed the character of the general meeting. These general meetings, now of scores of members, quite naturally had to limit the free participation of individuals. Not every individual was able, under the circumstances, freely to express his opinion publicly. Those gifted with eloquence, experience and civic courage could more readily avail themselves of the platform. Since it was impossible to convene meet-

TRANSITION: At Giv'at Brenner canvas shelters give way to permanent dwellings.



ings for the discussion of every social or economic detail, the kvutza was forced to change its whole administrative apparatus. It became advisable to divide the responsible mechanism into executive functions and consultative bodies. Those fulfilling executive functions were directly responsible to the entire kvutza. They had no right to make even the slightest alteration in the functions of the collective without the approval of the general meeting which was the kvutza's supreme and only sovereign body.

Of course, the conditions in all kvutzot were not the same. The old kvutzot, and those which continued to be primarily agricultural, retained the characteristics of the early kvutza with its limited number of members. These kvutzot tried as much as possible to avoid organizational institutions. The need for executive and legislative bodies was felt primarily in the larger communal settlements which engaged in road-building, and later in diversified agriculture and industry. The smaller kvutzot had only limited connections with industry. They had to conduct negotiations with the Zionist authorities, upon whom they were economically dependent; they had to sell their grain after the harvest and to get seed in the fall. This was almost the full extent of their outside dealings.

The larger kvutzot, on the other hand, had to maintain more diverse connections with the world around them. They had, therefore, to designate special persons equipped with special knowledge and experience as representative functionaries. Similar institutionalization on the part of the agricultural cooperatives, even the very small ones, took place at a later period when they ceased to depend on cereal growing and embarked upon mixed and intensive farming. The resultant evolution of a variety of tasks and functions gave many members an opportunity of developing and excelling in fields which had hitherto been closed to them. This undoubtedly was and continues to be a source of satisfaction because it broadens so remarkably the opportunities for personal self-assertion.

8. Transition and Transformation

In the history of the kvutza there are to be found many cases of people who did their daily work with great devotion and yet they were far from finding true satisfaction. Children of a nation which for centuries had been divorced from the soil and from manual labor, their new life was accompanied by emotional strain and stress. The idea of the kvutza and the rebirth of Zion constituted the spiritual fountainhead from which they nourished their tenacity and perseverance, for they were unable, if they were uninspired, to make themselves at one with the work they had to do. Then, too, they lacked the natural love for their work, inherent in an agricultural people. This psychological obstacle, which was characteristic of the process of transition, was called by A. D. Gordon "a conflict of the soul."

Gordon incessantly preached return to nature through the effort of the will: The Jewish people must overcome the Galut through a strenuous collective effort to rebuild itself and so must the individual overcome the inner conflict through self-redemption.

This was exactly the *spiritus movens* which inspired many of those who neither by education nor inclination were predisposed to agriculture or to manual labor. The struggle of the individual with himself very often entailed mental as well as physical suffering. The trials of self-conquest were painful. Those who were endowed with great will power, and there were many such, could overcome even a poor physical equipment. It was a hard struggle for the weak, especially when most of the kvutzot were agriculturally undeveloped. The chalutzim of the Third Aliya (in the twenties and partly even in the thirties) still faced this problem of bridging the gulf. This was reflected in the rather widespread custom of classifying people according to their degree of integration. Those who were more naturally disposed to intellectual pursuits and who were, consequently, clumsy with their hands, were called with ironic toleration "tarbutniks" ("culturists"). The name subtly indicated a mixture of respect and scorn—chiefly scorn because the "tarbutniks" were not always *en rapport* with the work they were doing.

This phenomenon generated another and more negative attitude. Occasionally, some of the physically superior boasted of their skill,

making unflattering comparisons with the "culturists." These, driven by a sense of insufficiency, forced themselves to overwork their limited physical capacity to a dangerous degree.

The struggle and conflict characteristic of the period of transformation found expression in the literature of the period, particularly in the novels of Y. Ch. Brenner and in the verse of the poetess Rachel. In his greatest novel, *Failure and Disaster*, Brenner pictures a young Palestinian worker who tries with almost superhuman effort to overcome his physical limitations and fails because of his body's betrayal. Again and again he tries to scale the indomitable wall of physical limitation. Failing finally and indubitably, he is forced to return to the old ghetto of Jerusalem, again to experience the morbidity and ugliness of the Galut which exists in the very heart of Zion. The hero again becomes an aimless and uninspired Galut Jew. In this novel, Brenner wanted to demonstrate that there is no salvation save through labor, which alone can deliver the Jew from the slough of purposelessness. Unlike Gordon, Brenner himself had failed to become a worker. His personal failure was undoubtedly the source material of his novel. By implication the hero becomes a generic reiteration of those who spent their youthful force in an unequal physical and emotional battle. Fortunately, the great majority of the chalutzim were able, with no matter what difficulty, to withstand the travail of transformation. Brenner, because of his understanding of this almost general conflict, became the literary prophet of the transition period.

The poems of Rachel, so beloved by the chalutzim, are replete with nostalgic longing for a pioneer's life on the shore of the beautiful Kinneret. What is significant in the veneration for the poems of Rachel is that it stems from compassion for Rachel, herself, who was unable, because of her illness, to work on the shore of her beloved lake. Her sorrowful poems seem to demonstrate that those who are shut out from the personal epic of pioneering sometimes appreciate most deeply the joy of creative living in new Zion.

The variety of functions, which resulted from the development of the kvutza, eliminated the greater part of the physical problems attendant upon the adaptation of individuals to a labor environment. In mixed farming, particularly, even the physically weak were able to be productive. The young, unsettled groups still engaged in public works were able to send certain of their number to the

established agricultural kvutzot. Thus the kvutza served as a highly useful instrument for the absorption of many who would otherwise have had a very gruelling struggle. In recent years the kvutzot have reached such a degree of diversification that the very aged are also able to do several hours of light work daily. Even the children are assigned a role in the economy of the collective. The variety of tasks has made it possible to lower the physical requirements for full acceptance into the group.

For newcomers at the end of the third decade of this century, when many well-established collective settlements were to be found in the Valley of Yizreel and elsewhere, the agony of adaptation to labor was considerably lessened.

9. Stabilization and Normalization

Good housing, even concrete buildings, are today provided by the Jewish Agency and the newcomer benefits from the progress that has already been made. In the past, good concrete buildings were erected first for the livestock. Only much later were the settlers housed so well. There was a certain evolutionary process in the housing in kvutzot. First the greatest number lived in tents, later in barracks and, finally, in real dwellings. The normalization and permanence of living conditions begins only after a large portion of the members are properly housed. Of course, since most of the kvutzot are organized as expanding social and economic units, there is always a number who are housed in temporary shelters.

The stabilization and normalization of the kvutza, attaining as it did a variety of functions and specialization of skills, posed yet other and newer problems. The individual, no longer so obsessed with the feeling of continuous sacrifice, and attaining a secure sense of belonging, was now prone to demand more from the kvutza. (A labor leader, referring to the mentality that existed in the earlier period, once jokingly remarked that members of the kvutzot looked at their watches while milking the cows in order to determine how close they were to the final phase of the upbuilding of the country.) People became more realistic and practical as soon as stability gave them steady vision. This was felt in the general endeavor to make life easier and in the activity connected with the physical improvement of the settlement. It might well have been a reaction against former privation and against a certain over-zealous feeling that comfort and convenience are preponderantly bourgeois functions. Indeed, it once happened, during a period of restricted immigration when thousands of Polish chalutzim were in training groups, that upon hearing that members of the kvutza Ain Harod lived in comfortably furnished homes with rugs on the floors they promised that when they should arrive the rugs would have to go. They swore to force the members of Ain Harod to return to the simple life that they had lived in the pioneering years. This was a simple case of making an ideal out of necessity.

The establishment of a more normal existence helps to carry

the newcomer over his initial difficulties. Barriers between them and the old settlers are eased by the expanding capacity of the settlement. Veterans are, naturally, highly respected but they are not specially privileged, and they and the newcomers enjoy equal rights and share equal duties. This relationship holds as well for probationary candidates and for temporary visitors.

A constant thorn in the side of devoted collectivists was the fact that the kvutza was forced, for many years, to be financially dependent upon Zionist funds. Stubborn soil and trial and error empiricism conspired to keep finances well on the red side of the ledger. It was painful to the members to realize that despite their labor and devotion they were unable to make ends meet. Kvutzot which were fortunate enough to be situated in fertile places were able to be self-sufficient in good years. As a rule, however, most of the kvutzot were long subsidized by the national funds. This dependence was a source of displeasure even when development of internal resources reduced it to a minimum. Referring to this difficulty, a member of Daganian once said, "We will return to the nation the sums given to us to enable us to build our farms, but who will return to us the tears we shed because we were dependent on help from resources not created by ourselves?" Nevertheless, the personal triumph that the people of the kvutzot felt over every dunam of land redeemed from the desert, the joy in the harvest and successful crops, sufficiently compensated them. The family spirit, the conquest of poverty and inequality strengthened their dedication to the cooperative ideal. They were and are inspired by the belief that they create, in their form of life, a pattern for future society and that the kvutza is the model of the best form of human productive activity. Thus the moments of elation outweighed the times of despondency.

The development of mixed farming and the introduction of industrial, craft and contracting units brought on the question of the right man for the right place. People began to become aware of abilities and limitations. It sometimes happened that persons previously outstanding in scholastic achievements or in youth leadership were helpless in adapting themselves to the new environment, while lesser lights, former salesmen and apprentices, displayed a most astonishing adaptability and versatility. The widening scope of the kvutza brought to light hidden talents and skills that would never have been known under the conditions they had left behind.

In newer tasks common sense and finger-tip dexterity proved a distinct advantage over scholarship. It was a time of opportunity for those whose "souls were in their hands" and scores of crafts and skills were acquired with amazing swiftness. Every new talent was welcomed and developed.

The experience of kvutza life proved that economic equality alone is not a balanced diet. Men are nourished by passions and strivings surpassing all attempts at a formula. The kvutzot, a society in miniature, also included seekers and thinkers. There were naturally some temperamental conflicts between the "culturists" (tarbutniks) and those who felt that the proper social stress should be on husbandry ("mishkism"). "Culturist" and "Laborist" alike, however, were united in their cooperative vision and their national viewpoint. This particular tension remains to this day but the kvutza remains unscathed because the conflict is generally not acute. Finally, because both kinds of people are able to find their fullest expression, the kvutza rises above the temperament of either.

10. Authority and Government

The regulations set up by the kvutza in order to prevent personal friction were very often unable to eliminate permanently the danger that the most capable persons might secure unconditional control by making themselves indispensable. Despite the elimination of economic inequality—thought to be the main source of conflict—the kvutza is unable to enforce character equality. In the collective, as elsewhere, knowledge, persuasion, strength of character and other factors of leadership are not necessarily coupled with amiable personal qualities. The kvutza, as a society chiefly concerned with the construction of genuine democracy, must preserve and defend its democratic achievements. A very capable person, devoid of high moral purpose, might place the society in a serious dilemma. In such a case the unity and dignity of the group is the highest consideration and even a most valued person would be sacrificed.

The kvutza, being a cross between a large family and a public body, can have no judge save sound public opinion. The principle of integrity over utility can be workable only where public opinion is free of personal prejudice or envy. It is feasible only provided the public is qualitatively guarded against the danger of becoming a "rabble." It must be "demos" and not "vulgus" in order to avoid injustice to those endowed with special gifts. Public opinion, inconstant and unstable at best, confers honors and dishonors suddenly and inexplicably. Judging individuals is always a delicate task and the criterion finally agreed upon was deeds and not personal character. No kvutza or any permanent community is without its nucleus of leadership. This is composed of the most active, alert and intelligent. Even in the small kvutza, with its intimate circle and its spontaneous democracy, there were people who constituted the soul of the group. It is unquestionably true that the kvutza has the leadership it deserves. If the society has any strength it should be able to restrain its dangerous element.

In the small kvutza (varying in size from 30 to 50 or 60 individuals) practical functions did not necessarily involve relationships with many persons. With the growth of the kvutza, however,

every responsibility began to involve ramified social relationships. It took some time to realize the necessity of separating functions of a purely social nature from practical economic institutions. Wholesale public treatment of purely social problems prevailed almost until the end of 1927. From then on, most of the kvutzot began to eliminate purely social jurisdiction from the committees in charge of labor and management. In earlier days, the treasurer, who was frequently also public representative of the community, not only was responsible for budget and financial policy but also had some measure of authority over dispensation of leave and personal expenses to individuals. At the same time, the person responsible for the coordination of work ("mesader avoda") had to see that no gaps were created and that no delinquency appeared. He disposed, as practicably as he was able, of the working hours of the members. Anyone who asked for leave during normal work periods was required to turn to him. The latter could decide, pretty much according to his own judgment, whether permission might be granted. Since he was guided almost entirely by the exigencies of the work at hand he was in difficult straits when the private needs of the individuals were in conflict with the need to insure a complete staff.

The treasurer as well as the coordinator of labor, by merit of their functions, were in a position to interfere with intimate, personal problems of the individual. What is even more important, they were in a position where they might put the cause of labor into active conflict with very vital and urgent personal needs. These functionaries of management and labor were in danger of overlooking the trees for the forest. Cultural needs as well as personal needs clamored for fulfillment. The satisfaction of these needs demanded a division of authority.

Accordingly, a committee ("vaadat chaverim") of 5 or 6 persons is now elected annually. This committee is given a wide measure of authority in all purely social problems. It has charge of housing, of securing finances for special individual needs, of determining what can be allowed for the support of destitute and infirm parents, of arranging for the convalescence of the ill, etc. The "vaadat chaverim" also receives visitors and tourists, attending to their comforts. It is the body which makes recommendations to the general assembly as to the acceptability of applicants for admission after their probationary period. The needs vary from day to day and a stable policy is, therefore, not strictly possible. Since the whole scope of this committee

pertains to intimate problems, every case has to be treated individually and by personal negotiations, often with a single member of the committee. In order to assure the highest confidence of the community in this committee, it is almost an unwritten law that no member serve twice successively and that each person serve on it at one time or another. Undoubtedly, this committee is the backbone of the kvutza's democratic set-up. It offsets the inevitable institutionalization of a community which concerns itself with securing the maximum efficiency of economy and personnel. Without the division of authority in an expanding group too much power would be concentrated in the hands of individuals.

Separation of functions operates, in effect, to make the task of the executive members more tolerable because it reduces conflict between divergent interests and avoids the aggregation of a dangerous latitude of power. Thus, the general membership is enabled to elect to executive positions the most capable and the most experienced persons, without having to take social compatibility and tolerability into consideration. To be sure, the division of functions is not strictly delineated: there is considerable overlapping since economic and social problems are never strictly separable. In general, however, the kvutzot have not experienced serious collision between the social and economic authorities.

The "vaadat chaverim" (committee of social affairs and personnel) concerns itself with procuring a maximum of convenience for the individual in his personal and social life. The executive committee is concerned with achieving maximal success in management. At the outset of the season the number of labor days and the projected budget are not discussed by either of the executive bodies but by a special planning committee. The budget for social administration is included. The "vaadat chaverim" is therefore able to estimate the allowances for cultural activities, for travelling expenses and funds for those on leave, and for routine personal expenditures of individuals. When extraordinary needs seem to exceed the budget, only the sovereign body, the general meeting, can give sanction. The general meeting is the highest board of appeal and is the arbitrator between the "vaadat chaverim" and the executive. The same rule applies to long absences. If the "vaadat chaverim" decides to allow a member to go abroad or to leave for a longer period of time than usual, the "sidur avoda" may object. It is then up to the general meeting to decide. It becomes obvious that the "vaadat chaverim" functions

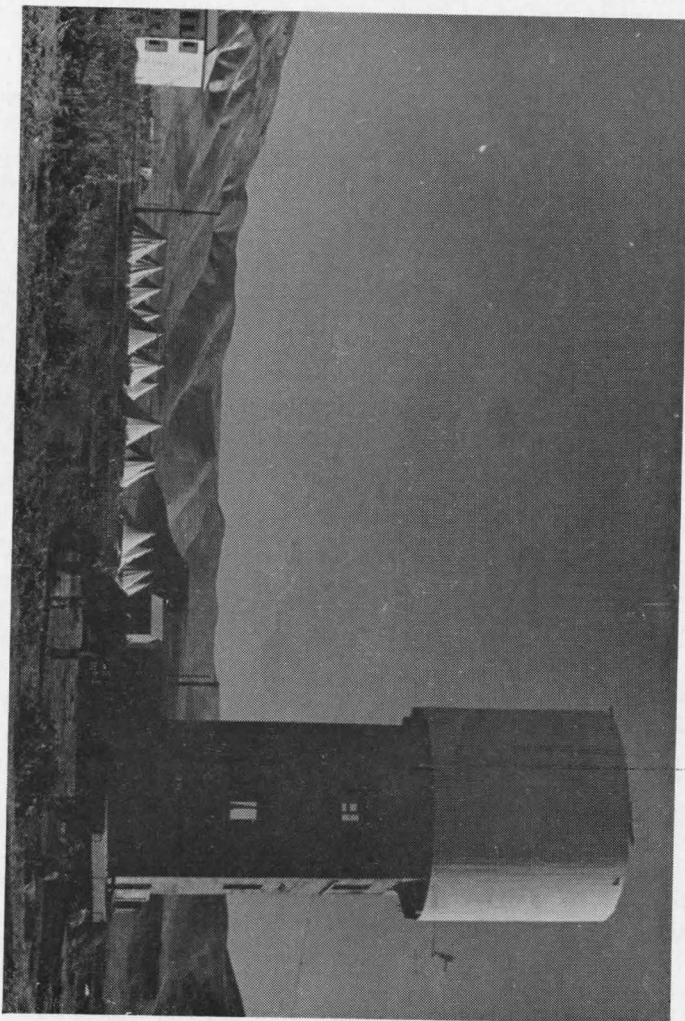
to defend the individual against the society in the person of the management. This dual system can work only where the society is permeated with a sense of responsibility. Often a kvutza is forced to forego a holiday under pressure of urgent work. Where a true sense of proportion of needs obtains, such a division of functions is eminently possible. It seems feasible in the kvutzot.

The executive body is functionally constituted and includes representatives from each of the labor units. Every branch of work enjoys full autonomy within the general framework. Naturally, a number of more experienced people plan the course of work. The more experienced each group is, the greater the measure of self-government it enjoys. This operates to reduce the necessity of individual leadership to a minimum. In addition to the general staff, in any branch which is seasonal, there are the persons who are needed at periods when the work demands a sharp increase in the personnel. These are made available by the expedient of shifting. The executive body in charge of labor ("sidur avoda") is responsible for making labor power available when it is needed and at a minimum harm to any other activity. This is naturally a consultative task and is daily undertaken by the executive together with representatives of all branches concerned.

The experts in any particular field are hardly ever shifted from the work they are doing. Only the passive and disinterested are liable to be transferred from one unskilled task to another. Of course, unskilled work is an important part of every endeavor and everyone is ready to be sent where he is most needed.

No department is a sovereign body, neither is the "sidur avoda" a mechanical device for filling in labor shortages. Every branch is required to give periodic (annually or seasonally) reports to the general assembly. Reports and plans are then discussed and criticized by all the members of the kvutza. This gives everyone an opportunity to get a panoramic view of the entire economy of the group. The whole month preceding the Hebrew new year is generally devoted to discussion and planning for the next year. This is a very warm month out of doors as well as in the social atmosphere of the kvutza. At this time, also, new committees are elected. The newly-elected executive (treasurer, mesader avoda, and two or three other functionaries) is charged with the task of coordinating all functions. Fiscal and functional surveys and plans are then submitted and a program for the coming year is adopted. Special sub-committees are set up in order to deal with difficult problems and with new phases of labor arising

IN SELF-DEFENSE: The water tower at Masada (founded in 1937) is equipped with guns and signal apparatus—a testimony to the troublous years of Arab riots.



from expansion. Special committees are sometimes set up exclusively with the view of familiarizing a greater number with the special administrative problems. This last operates to increase the number of persons available for special functions.

In some of the larger kvutzot a special general council with consultative power is also elected. This operates as a quick substitute for the general assembly. Many kvutzot disapprove of this set-up, maintaining that it must affect negatively the personal interest of the bulk of the membership who will feel that they have a legislative body to worry over general problems. It is also feared that such a body will encourage passivity and reduce the alertness of certain individuals vested with responsibility. Therefore, the general principle is to elect functionaries to purely executive posts and to limit their rights to make far-reaching changes without consulting the whole community.

The kvutza has always tried to obviate the danger that many individuals might, as a result of centralization and regimentation, become impersonal cogs in the working mechanism. In the infant stage of the small kvutzot there was an aversion to such a constitutional set-up. Indeed there were groups who were averse to the parliamentary procedure of voting. These preferred long discussion, trusting that reason will prevail. They were disdainful of the democracy of a simple majority. However, it became apparent that any sort of expansion would have to end this state of anarchistic naivete. It was realized that even the discussion of vital problems required discipline. Therefore, voting and chairmanship not only functioned to preserve order, but it was also a vital factor in steering and balancing the debate. The chairman was able to be the guardian of the democracy of the weak by encouraging the weak and inarticulate against the eloquence and personal weight of the strong. However, when vital issues are at stake the kvutza tries to avoid decision by a narrow majority preferring to keep the question open until it is clear that most have agreed. Thus the machinery of parliamentary procedure, sensibly modified, was found to be a necessary safeguard in the larger and more developed collectives.

11. The Individual and the Community

Social regulations in the kvutza are intended to enable everyone to enjoy fullest equality and opportunity. The freedom of a single individual begins to be limited when it encroaches upon the similar freedom of another. No formula can give an adequate description of social interaction in the kvutza. The collective has eliminated the individual economic struggle as a determining factor of personal relations. Adverse economic conditions of the group may, to be sure, affect the relations of members to the collective, but the history of the kvutza has proved that, by and large, unfavorable relations between members do not rise from economic causes. Friction develops as a result of the slackening of the collective ideal, improper personal inter-relation of individuals or from purely psychological causes. The emancipation of the individual from the competitive struggle and everything it implies is undoubtedly conducive to a refinement of mutual relations. Absorption in daily work does not very often leave the individual free for the luxury of developing a "problem personality." Mutual relations are adjusted spontaneously by the control of the common interest in the collective ideal.

It is generally assumed that the individual is not only enriched in experience through the struggle for existence but that he is also given incentive through competitive activity. It is further assumed that the individual, by struggling alone, must bring into play all of his potentialities, thereby gaining in personal strength. It is believed that character is molded only by individual experience with adversity. Because of this viewpoint, there were times when no one, except for the members of the collectives and a handful of sympathizers, believed in the ability of the kvutza to survive. The opponents of the kvutza often asserted that it would stifle the incentive of the individual and would blunt his sense of responsibility towards property. Not all kvutzot, of course, can boast of success. Some of them have suffered because of social or political reasons. Almost none of them suffered in the slightest from any social or economic delay arising from lack of incentive or lack of fullest cooperation.

Trotsky, who was in charge of the Russian collectives in the early days before large-scale collectivization, felt compelled to introduce

a system of rewards. He frequently found an appalling lack of general respect for public property. His rewards were intended to serve as an incentive to work and to social consciousness. In Palestine too there were those in whom the principle of private ownership was so deeply imbedded that they demanded that buildings in the kvutzot be so erected as to serve as individual homes after the kvutzot are dissolved and its members renounce the principles of collectivism. The expedient of rewards has so far been found unnecessary and the principle of private ownership has not in any degree penetrated the kvutza.

While there were a great many errors of inexperience during the upbuilding of the kvutza, and while there was an attendant waste of human energy, the kvutza is indubitably a *fait accompli*. Accumulation of experience has since lightened the burden of the budding kvutzot and has given them a course by which to steer. Diversification and stabilization have strengthened and justified the general feeling of responsibility and devotion.

The greatest single factor in the continued development and spread of the kvutza movement in Palestine, against physical and ideological hardship, can be summed up in the single Hebrew word *chalutzit* (pioneering). The concept *chalutzit* is packed with implications. It is a generic term embracing the spiritual, ideological, economic and even religious drive behind the movement for the healthy regeneration of an oppressed nation. What Zionist doctrine is to the world Zionist movement, what the great national funds are to Jewish national economy in Palestine, *chalutzit* is to the actual physical return of the Jewish nation to its traditional soil. The idealistic energy against the background of the actual crumbling of Jewish positions in the diaspora was the force which enabled an urban and crippled people to exert its fullest energy in the face of almost insurmountable obstacles. The saga of the chalutz deserves its place beside the pioneering of any nation striking its roots in new earth.

Pecuniary reward, which constitutes one of the most powerful incentives in the competitive world, is replaced in the kvutza by social reward. Gratitude for devotion and achievement is not absent in the kvutza but it is not manifested through tangible material things. Competition is not eliminated but the community stimulates the desire to sublimate it or direct it into socially constructive channels. Reward has no relation to exception from duty or to privilege.

Regardless of the importance of the function filled by those engaged in non-physical tasks, there are certain physical duties from which no one is exempt. Such an ethical value has been placed upon labor that no one may be allowed complete exemption from it. Unskilled labor is never regarded as humiliating and, therefore, skilled and unskilled worker alike are occasionally assigned to it. This evaluation is utterly and organically an accepted truth. The routine-work in the kitchen is one of the unskilled tasks assigned by rotation. Skilled workers sometimes prefer this particular task in order to relax from the strain of their usual functions. Others prefer this occasionally in order to take advantage of extra free time resulting from the kitchen work arranged in relays for reading and study. This is not to say kitchen work or other skilled tasks is a refuge for the indolent. They do, however, serve as a welcome change for those who are engaged in fields which are taxing and straining. From the time that complicated and specialized labor became a part of the kvutzot no responsible collective found it sensible to put skilled persons at unskilled labor simply to be absurdly faithful to the principle of equality. The equal dignity of all labor is successful only when there is a general realization of the equal utility of all labor. Permanent self-education and group-feeling safeguard against an aristocracy of function.

The kvutza has reduced the dependence of one individual on another to a minimum. At the same time, it has intensified the interdependence of the group. It has linked its membership closer together than any other form of society has done through proximity of dwelling, comradeship, common dining, labor, education, common suffering and joy. In an individualist society the question of personal relations between individuals does not occupy such a socially important place as it does in the collective. In an individualist society the contact between individuals is not so close and, hence, there is less cause for conflict.

But in the kvutza with its daily contacts limited to a small group of people, conflict of personalities is very likely to occur. The whole kvutza is unable to intervene in cases of a purely personal nature. Individual behavior must be controlled by individuals. The elimination of personal friction depends however upon the ability of the society to cultivate a complexity of cultural relations and social ties between its members. The unity of the group depends upon the evaluation of individuals regardless of faults and weaknesses, abilities or disabilities, as men who contribute their share to the building

of the community. Caution and self-control are eminently necessary, and persons gifted with a high degree of social character are quick to find happiness in the cooperative form of life. Others must overcome personal conflict. It is evident that the kvutza develops smooth communal living as its individuals develop the necessary personal qualities.

Paradoxical as it may seem, the best members of the collective are very often those who are able to live independently on a personal plane. The socially-minded are not necessarily good members. Sociability requires polish, adaptability and a certain adroitness of speech, which does not always indicate high personal qualities, though it does not necessarily preclude them. Because of the compactness of the community, a reasonable distance between individuals is perhaps desirable. Then too, introverted natures are psychologically better able to work toward self-protection and hence toward the perfection of community life. Sociability in kvutza life is a lesser safeguard against the danger of social snagging than a limited preservation of personal boundaries. Personal collision is far more serious in a small community than in a metropolis and, on this account, the problem is a weighty one. The kvutza cannot, therefore, be considered merely as an intimate group of friends—intimacy may not survive adversity. The kvutza is a society based on objective social values.

This should not be taken to mean that the kvutza is not a network of complicated social groups. The community of interest and the personal propinquity is comparable only to a family or to a very close circle of friends. Relations in the kvutza, to be sure, are conditioned by an objective social ideal. Friendships, therefore, are not based upon reciprocity of favors or services in a tangible way but upon a plane of spiritual disinterestedness. Friendships are not exposed to the buffets and tests of the individualistic world but are based rather upon thorough knowledge and mutual appreciation gained by continuous and close contact. But on the other hand the very intimacy necessitates a greater depth of character. Friendly groups constitute concentric circles very likely to enrich the life of the collective.

Altogether the problem of personal relations is quite complicated. People are prone to judge their neighbors by their faults rather than by their virtues. In a limited society there is a strong temptation to subject one's neighbor to a critical analysis. On the other hand, the pressure of conformity acts to file off many a sharp edge. Strong characters, of course, rise above the procrustean bed of con-

formity; weaker persons may succumb. The kvutza is a brotherhood of the strong and the weak and the average. How this brotherhood operates depends on the ability of the kvutza to stimulate and further the constructive side of human character at the expense of the destructive side.

One of the leading figures of the kvutza movement thus defined the cause of social decadence: "Along with the rise of a feeling of inferiority and the absence of a sense of purpose, cultural needs proportionately diminish. Something must alleviate boredom where the future is obscure. In such a case people become either mystical or satirical and the cabaret becomes their favorite diversion." In the kvutza, too, when the goal is obscured there is the danger of internal disintegration. In everyday life not everyone can be mindful of ultimate ideals. A multitude of petty things can constitute an infectious irritation. The membership of the kvutza is complex. The members are products of many different environments and their past circumstances as well as psychological differences are bound to create conflicts. The cunning of the weak, the primitivism of the crude, the ignobility of the unprincipled are under a greater social control in the kvutza which calls forth a greater measure of self-control. In individualist society one is able to unload his resentment outside his immediate circle. In the kvutza this negative energy, craving for an outlet, must be controlled and neutralized lest convention throttle community life and lest gossip and defamation poison the creative springs.

Almost intuitively the kvutza was founded on the land where even nature sometimes seems to inspire tranquility, balance, and ease. As a reaction to industrialized and impersonalized modern society they tried to create a community based upon close personal relations and the satisfaction which arises from a life close to the creative forces of nature. To be sure they cannot completely escape mechanization. Who would plow with a camel when he can use a tractor? But conscious of the problem they have successfully tried to prevent the intrusion of the machine spirit into a sphere where it does not belong—into personal relationships. At any rate, within a society based on modern technology and division of labor which it involves, the kvutza has achieved for its individual members the maximum freedom workers are able to achieve in such a system. The amount of freedom which kvutza members enjoy in work and in

social relations enables them to cope with the shortcomings and weaknesses inherent in human nature.

There are some, who, for various reasons, leave the kvutza after a time. It was never expected that the cooperative community would serve all men. The bulk of the membership, however, remains with the group. This may be accounted for on the basis of pure self-interest. Most of the members know just how much they are likely to attain and how difficult would be their struggle in the great anonymity of the cities. Many of them have gone through at least one period of unemployment. They know that cultural opportunities in individualist society are not always comfortably attainable and they realize how incomparably greater are the possibilities of personal protection in the warmth of a group. Knowing these things, if there is no driving force that compels them, they are unwilling to go out into the great outside. Thus, apart from adherence to the kvutza as an objective idea, it is enlightened self-interest that brings the individual into the fold of the collective and keeps him there.

Two workers were once roommates in a hospital in the Valley of Yizreel. They had been there for quite some time. One of them was a member of a kvutza, the other was a smallholder. The smallholder was perpetually worried over his neglected farm, over his newly accrued expenses, over the manner in which his family had to live because of his illness. To top it all he had to return immediately to all the hard work which had accumulated during his absence. The kvutza member was not persecuted by such restlessness. He was certain that the others were taking care of everything and that his duties were a light burden on so many shoulders. Having no finances, he had no financial worries of his own, and his family, as members in their own right, were well cared for. Moreover, he knew that his comrades would not expect him to return to hard work immediately, but that he would gradually assume his old tasks as his strength returned. In other words, he felt utterly protected by his community. He had what is generally termed social security, in its deepest and truest meaning.

Since the beginning of the debacle of Polish Jewry many of the kvutzot were brought face to face with a grave social-economic problem. Many of the members had parents who had suffered complete ruin. Naturally these members wanted to come to their parents' aid and it was natural that they should think of leaving the kvutza in order to earn money with which to do so. The kvutza, however,

could on principle not allow its members to have personal economic problems, since the collective is supposed to be in itself the solution. Accordingly, many thousands of dollars were sent abroad even at the expense of the economic security of the collectives. In a great number of cases the parents were taken into the kvutza. Naturally, this service placed a heavy economic burden on the group. The housing problem was thereby greatly aggravated, sometimes even forcing the members involved to leave their more comfortable quarters to the parents. But on the whole, the group was determined to do its duty by the individual.

On this account it becomes clear that benefits derived by some individuals far exceed those of others. The kvutza is not built upon the principle of equality of the wage-earner. The needs of the individuals are not equal but everyone has the equal right to demand that certain fundamental needs be satisfied by the kvutza entirely apart from the consideration of equal sharing. What is true of material needs is also true of spiritual ones. The kvutza, within the limitations of reason and means, often finances study and training for those members who are unusually gifted. This is regarded as a normal procedure.

A certain over-zealousness was characteristic of the kvutza in its early days. Communal living was thought to be complete community control of every single bit of property. This included even the most personal items of clothing and there was a strict control over these as over farm implements and other supplies.

As the kvutza matured it became obvious that such an extremism was not at all necessary. Today, each individual has a certain minimum supply of wearing apparel which is his own. In some cases only work clothes are public property but even this is rare. Almost all communities have realized that clothes and their care are a matter of individual choice. As for the women to whom these matters have an almost traditional importance, at the beginning of each season they consult with the woman in charge of clothes who shows them a variety of materials, patterns, and styles. After the miniature "fashion show" each can choose the style which meets with her particular standards of taste. It has not been found that this compromise with individualism has marred the collective ideal. The old fear that the private ownership of any belongings might introduce the germ of acquisitiveness was stilled only after a degree of social maturity was reached.

12. Men and Women

Women have achieved a great measure of personal independence in the kvutza. They are not confined to routine female occupations because the diversification of labor has offered many fields of endeavor in which women can engage. From the very beginning of the cooperative movement women were inspired by the idea of complete equality and the kvutza has always endeavored to satisfy this desire. In the beginning, when the number of women was very small, they were naturally given the traditional women's duties. Being unable, for this reason, to perform many of the functions fulfilled by men, they felt that their lives had changed very little (from the standpoint of their occupation) in spite of the fact that they were economically independent of their husbands. The family had ceased to be an economic unit but still the men were supplying the means and the women were managing the household. Under this arrangement it was only natural that the women were generally unable to take an active part in the social or administrative side. On this account they were not always able to understand the general problems of the collective and seemed doomed to traditional female social passivity. An attempt was made to discard the monopoly of women over household services by introducing as many men as possible into this work, but this arrangement alone could not be expected to alter the situation in any appreciable degree.

Only with the rise of a greater variety of functions could women find proper fields of activity. Then they were able to gain a good deal of understanding of general problems together with a more active part in public affairs. Many women were absorbed in the work in the vineyards, in the citrus groves and in the vegetable gardens. Their inferiority feeling was thus in a great measure eliminated.

There were always a certain number of exceptional women who, even in the early difficult days, insisted upon standing side by side with the men in their most strenuous labor. Many of these have achieved positions of great prestige in the general public life of the land. It would, in the final analysis, be untrue to say that women have achieved a position of perfect equality, for even with the utmost

effort on all sides women have not yet risen entirely above their social heritage of passivity.

It might be expected that because of the actual equality of women they should be satisfied with the role they play. However, socially conscious women leaders are vexed by women's inability in general to rise above their traditional passivity. In order to activate the women certain communities stipulated that committees must contain a certain percentage of women. In the main this has proved to be successful but certain women insist upon the spirit of perfect equality by maintaining that only the number of women should be elected to office who show distinct ability in the field. They demand that natural potentialities, acquired knowledge, and experience should constitute the only determinant of eligibility. With this attitude it seems only a matter of time before women will rid themselves of the feeling of inferiority with respect to the men in the execution of the general tasks in the kvutza.

There is a certain number of functions in which women have proved their excellence. In many kvutzot they are in charge of cultural activities, in educational committees, in secretariats, in health councils. In most kvutzot they are represented in the committee in charge of labor. During the last riots women were trained in the use of firearms and were permitted to participate in the dangerous and delicate task of the night watch. In the 1929 riots hardly any had been permitted to do this. More recently women have been replacing men in work with tractors and other heavy labor. Whether this is a temporary phenomenon because of the war remains to be seen. It is questionable whether the assumption of heavy labor by women can be regarded as a totally good thing. It will be remembered that the early women pioneers were reckless in this respect, refusing to face the reality of certain natural limitations.

There are women who feel that they have already achieved the principle of equality and that further efforts must lead to a renunciation of "womanhood." A woman, they say, must not forget that there are certain spiritual functions specific to womanhood. They feel that motherliness, tenderness, softening of relationships may give way to rudeness if women push themselves beyond the common-sense limitations. As a matter of fact, the lot of women in the kvutza is incomparably easier than that of women outside the collective. Their worries as wives and mothers are reduced and their leisure is unmolested by petty cares.

In the newer kvutzot much attention is being paid to physical training of women through systematized education and gymnastics. Cultural activities and vocational courses serve to fill out the lives of those who want to use their leisure to good purpose. In addition women are occupied with the traditional female role of beautifying the environment of the community.

On the whole, it is correct to say that women in the kvutza are equal partners in a great many manifestations of social life. The only "defect" of those women who are dissatisfied with their place is that they want to do more and more. They feel that they are building a new world, and they want not only to hand over the bricks but also to lay them in place themselves.

The economic basis of the family having been removed, only mutual inclination and attachment constitute the basis of the family unit in the collective. Husband and wife are socially and economically independent of each other. They seldom are engaged in the same work and often even work at different times. Most of the day and part of the evening are spent among others. All their practical economic interests are identical with those of the community. Apart from the care of their own private quarters, there is nothing that separates them from the whole group. The fact that they meet at leisure time reduces to a minimum the likelihood of divergence of opinion on practical things. Thus all prerequisites of fully harmonious relations undisturbed by petty cankers, are present. No material causes are likely to affect full accord. Mutual yearning for an intimate corner in the community and strong bonds of parental love are given the fullest opportunity to strengthen the union. The cohesive factor of joint work and common obligations to a sometimes hostile world are, to be sure, absent and the social hypocrisy or external pressure do not operate to keep an incompatible couple together.

It depends upon the cultural level and the moral standards which operate invisibly to keep the freedom of separation from deteriorating into moral unrestraint. The kvutza is interested in the greatest welfare of its members. It is, therefore, not interested in forcing people to live together in slavish submission to social convention. Only the force of public opinion, when it is actuated by genuine benevolence and justice, can operate to prevent abuse of moral freedom. An individual with the erotic habits of a butterfly cannot expect to command the respect of his fellows. Normally the number of family tragedies is not great. It is not possible to gather reliable

figures because of the differences in age and circumstances of the various kvutzot. Whatever scientific attempts have been made seem to indicate that the number of divorces in communal life is, if not smaller, not larger than in non-communal life.

The family unit is almost sacrosanct in the kvutza. Even under extremely difficult housing conditions the kvutza does its utmost to provide adequate family accommodations when necessary. The community is deeply interested in sheltering the love of its people from intrusion and disturbance. In general, permanence in family life is much appreciated by the community. The organic sensitivity of the whole group is affected by attenuation and cataclysm in the lives of its individuals.

13. The Care and Education of Children

From the very day of their birth, children are a community responsibility. Though in some kvutzot children spend the night in the quarters of their parents, most kvutzot have developed a communal system extending even to overnight care. They spend all of their time in the nursery and, when they have outgrown it, they are transferred to the children's community. In either case, they are cared for by responsible, often specially trained persons. The children's home is a kind of state within a state and its regimen is planned by those who work with the children in conjunction with a committee of parents or responsible elected individuals. Very careful tending and hygienically scientific nursing have raised the health standard to an enviable height and reduced mortality to a minimum. The mortality rate among the children in the kvutzot ranks with the child-mortality rate of New Zealand, i. e. among the lowest in the world. Considering the difficult climate, this is undoubtedly a very great achievement. A very high number (one worker to three children) of persons engaged in caring for the children is responsible for this measure of success. The kvutza has, however, insisted upon sparing nothing to achieve it.

Care and education of children is so vital a concern that there have been cases of grave social crisis because of divergence of opinion on these questions. The stumbling-block has always been the question of parental control as opposed to social control. It has been acceded that care during the day should be left to the specialists, but there were many who wanted their children to be with them in the evenings and during the nights. These argued that complete separation of the children from their parents was likely to warp filial attachment. They maintained that nothing can replace the depth of maternal love, that strangers must not be permitted to usurp the place of the parents, that the subtle relationship between child and parent must not be disturbed.

On the other hand, those who argued for complete community control of children by appointed experts were stimulated by their intense desire to keep out everything that smacked of private ownership or private authority. They were contemptuous of the romanticism of family life with its authoritarian principle. Admitting that

FOR TOMORROW'S COLLECTIVISTS: The school of Ein Harod and Tel Yosef moves to new quarters.



the relinquishing of children to the care of strangers is a great sacrifice on the part of the parents, they pointed out that the collective way of life aims at eliminating the animal element from human relationships. They demanded that the principle of complete material and educational equality be applied to children, too. The children, they said, have to be imbued with the spirit of collectivism. They must be spared the pain of adjusting themselves to the demands of the collective. As a matter of principle, the women of the kvutza must be liberated from the routine of traditional female pursuits and children must be given an opportunity to develop personal autonomy. It must be stated that this extreme attitude rose primarily out of a lack of understanding of the problem. During the period of immaturity of the kvutza, the members attempted to replace experience with dogma and to impose a schematic system of human relations. But in a short time and with a little experience, it was realized that no blueprint could be made for family relations and that only sense and moderation could solve these difficulties.

Actually, under the primitive conditions prevalent in the early kvutzot, communal tending and education of children was not merely advantageous; it was imperative. None of the communities could afford to make all of their buildings really habitable for children. At most, they could build one really good building to house a children's community. The sanitation one could attain in tents or shacks was negligible. Not only altruistic wishes dictated the course eventually taken. The objective circumstances played a substantial part. Even parents who opposed separation in principle wanted their children to be where they could best be cared for.

The actual significance and practicability of this system of communal training was rightly understood by the people who created and introduced it only after it began to work. It proved of really great benefit to parents and children alike. Unlike the women of the individualist settlements who have the double duty of mother and farm-worker, mothers in the kvutzot are not so burdened and are hence calmer and better balanced. Since they are not tense and irritable, they are better able to meet their children in the evening with an ease unmatched in any other social atmosphere. Very young children are put to bed by their parents and the family bond is reconsecrated at the bedside of the child. This family hour inevitably becomes, for both parents and children, a bright symbol. Parents come to their children after a whole day's separation and the

children see their parents when the impressions of the day are being digested. The parent-child relationship has not been weakened. It has been strengthened and purified. There are cases where divorced parents meet nightly at the bedside of their children and the child is never aware of the rift. Thus the child is protected from adult cat-actylsms which he cannot understand.

Naturally, as the child grows older he comes into more frequent contact with his parents. Occasionally he is taken to the parents' quarters and he begins to enter into the family relationship as a frequent participant rather than as a guest. Needless to say, parents when on vacation or traveling are permitted to take their children with them. The experience of many years has brought a truer understanding of the needs of the child as well as a greater generosity toward the needs and the longings of the parents.

At the age of six children are taken from the nursery and transferred to the educational institution known as the Children's Community. Here they remain until adolescence. The children's community combines characteristics of school and community. It developed empirically, being guided only by the principle of kvutza as a goal toward which the children were to be directed. For this reason it was necessary that the children's community concern itself with much more than mere education. It had to be a model of the cooperative community patterned after the kvutza itself. The children are, therefore, trained in social contact and in the practical work of managing and conducting a collective.

Teachers are equal members of the children's community. They participate in the deliberations of the group and in the various committees as individuals. They play a consultative role and are regarded by the youngsters as older, more experienced comrades rather than as teachers. The latter do not confine themselves to their pedagogic tasks. They must take part in all functions of the community. The relations, therefore, between pupil and teacher are devoid of the formality and constraint usually found in more orthodox schools. Cases of delinquency and insubordination are dealt with by a council of the more mature students.

Classes are not rigid age-groups since they are conducted according to the level of the pupils. Apart from basic subjects like mathematics, nature study, geography, most subjects are taught by the project method where the greatest amount of self-education can take place. Stress is placed upon subjects of practical importance to the

community with a great deal of attention being paid to the humanities and to the study of Palestinian history, ethnology, geography, and to the Hebrew language. The primary objective is to make the school meet the future practical needs of the child. Therefore the Children's Community has miniature workshops, smithies, farms, etc. The study of natural science is based as much as possible on observation. The development of natural curiosity and alertness is put above academic excellence.

The kvutzot, naturally, prefer to take their teachers from among individuals who are themselves members of the collective since these must ultimately teach the collective ideal. The responsibility of these teachers is far greater than that of the ordinary pedagogue, for their charges are with them nearly the whole day. They must live with and for their students and must thoroughly know every aspect of communal living in theory and in practice. In addition they must understand how to adjust the children's community to the adult community so that the bridge may be smoothly traversed. In general, the pedagogic system is still pretty much in the trial-and-error stage and the teacher must be able to do his own experimentation.

Although most of the children's communities have their own farms and workshops, many of the older children are given an opportunity to work with the adults for several hours daily, particularly at times of greater labor demand. The kvutza does not want to segregate the children's community from the adult community. On the contrary, the kvutza is interested in seeing that the children become accustomed to its social life through direct contact by means of work and by encouraging friendly social connections. By this means the children attach themselves to the place and to the people against the day when they make the natural transition into full-fledged adult membership in the community.

Since they are brought up in a rural environment and since their contacts are almost all with working people, the natural sphere of the children is labor. They are spared the difficulties of long training which their parents were forced to undergo. Their training makes them technically skillful and gives them a fine sense for natural phenomena. They are not seldom quite aware of their superiority over their parents, with respect to technical skill and easy orientation and are, therefore, sometimes self-assertive, if not arrogant. This is somewhat stimulated by the fact that the society focuses a great deal of attention, energy and finances on the younger generation. Whatever

arrogance this generation possesses is somewhat offset by a general appreciation of the fact that the older generation is quite superior in experience, which it gained under the not too favorable conditions of pioneering.

In the curriculum, special attention is paid to natural sciences, in line, purposely or intuitively, with the battle against the vices of the ghetto. The educational objective is to fit the children for an agricultural life and much time is devoted to the practical and theoretical study of natural phenomena. This is done side by side with actual work in a model farming community and with the example of the cooperative before their eyes.

In close connection with the study of nature, the children study Palestinography. This term covers all phases of the country; its history, geography, biology, topography, population, sociology, etc. It is begun at the very outset of the school career, largely through hikes, mountain-climbing, camping. This system of environmental education serves to bring the child en rapport with his country. Travel in Palestine is, of course, extremely interesting from the standpoint of Bible study. The Bible thus becomes a living book about Palestine instead of a mysterious listing of unintelligible names and obscure events.

In its government, the children's community is a replica of the cooperative itself. The highest governing body is the general meeting which alone can delegate powers. Self-government is a part of the routine of the children's lives and is as much taken for granted by them as parental authority is taken for granted outside the cooperative.

Students of the higher classes often meet separately in order to discuss important political and social issues with the teachers. Political and social alertness is looked upon with great favor. This is regarded as necessary in order to avoid narrowness of vision which would inevitably follow a program dedicated to the perfection of a small communal orbit. They are given opportunity for contact with large youth groups with wider social horizons. It is therefore not accidental that a large number join organizationally and ideologically well-knit youth organizations.

The connection of the older groups of the children's community with national youth movements, particularly with "Hanoar Haoved", is of great importance to the social, intellectual and emotional development of the adolescents. Most of these have known only the



NEW WORLD SYMPHONY: Youth of the Emek enjoy an enriching diversion.

limited sphere of the kvutza and are, from a personal standpoint, far removed from the struggle for existence, unemployment, hunger and disappointments of individualist society. Being so well taken care of in the kvutza, their organizational tie-up with youth movements extending beyond the kvutza is their sole means of contact with the outside world. A year after graduation from the children's community, they are given leave to go outside the kvutza for a year in order to see the life outside and to compare it with the cooperative system. They are thus given an opportunity to re-examine their loyalty to the form of life for which they have been educated.

A constant close contact is maintained between the adults and the children's community. The adult personnel which works with the children is the primary link between the two communities. The parents who live in the adult community are another link. Beside these there is an educational committee, a consultative body which is extremely interested in strengthening the ties between the children and the adult community.

The kvutza regards the children as heirs of their pioneer values and it spares no effort to see that the children become true followers. The adult community recognizes that untoward events in the kvutza may have unpleasant repercussions in the children's community. On this account the kvutza is ruthless in its self-criticism whenever the problem seems to be connected with the children's community. Before the children's community had yet graduated any product of its educational theories, many feared that the children would be without the spiritual values and ideals of their parents. Because of this fear an unusual stress was laid upon the spiritual idea behind the material effort.

In reality, the adults feared a certain loss of the feeling of dedication which spurred them to endure and to create as a national-regenerative vanguard. They had been saturated with the suffering of Jewish generations and they had revolted against the anomalies of the Galut. Though they were obliged by the exigencies of construction to be overwhelmingly concerned with material things, they were well aware of the idealistic force behind what they were doing. Perhaps, they reasoned, the children, who find the kvutza a natural environment, will take the first result—the cooperative community—too much for granted and will lose sight of the great human ideals of their fathers and mothers. Perhaps they may become

petty rationalists, with practical success as their primary objective. Perhaps security, satiety, and a certain material comfort will make them forget the values toward which the kvutza strives.

The complete accord between the youngsters who have already matured and the generation which bred them belies these misgivings and apprehensions. They have already given evidence that they are worthy followers of their parents. It is true to say that the kvutza has, so far, been spared the struggle between fathers and sons, the eternal phenomenon that seldom spares any generation.

14. Heritage

In the first stages of development, every kvutza was so completely pre-occupied with its problems and tasks of upbuilding that people rarely found time or inclination to ponder over the reshaping and creation of national tradition. Even the custom of the Sabbath had to give way to the claims of necessity. Needless to say, the holidays, even those rife with national content, were neglected. As zealots, the pioneers burned behind them the bridges which connected them with the past. This was basically a contradiction since they were ideologically driven to preserve their national integrity which had begun to decay. Unable to accept the current historical values of Jewish life which was steeped in religious ritual, they had not yet developed the faculty of recasting those values and giving them a new life.

But very soon they were aware of a certain barrenness in their communal life and they began consciously to search for new forms and to revitalize old ritual with new meaning. The growth of a new generation also stimulated this feeling of emptiness. They began to fear that they were orphaning their children spiritually, culturally, and traditionally. First of all, it became clear that they must create a link between past Jewish history and the present. Therefore, all holidays whose ritual and implication were deeply rooted in the life of the Jewish nation when it formerly lived in Palestine began to be revived and were clad with contemporary meaning. They found it easiest to revive first those holidays which were deeply linked up with the rhythm of Palestinian nature. Pesach, commemorating Jewish freedom and Palestinian spring; Shavuot, the festival of the first fruits; Succot, the harvest celebration; these and other national and nature festivals were revived and properly celebrated. The Sabbath has recovered its original significance as a laborer's rest day. Many traditional values are now retained even though somewhat stripped of their ritual surface.

The kvutzot are far from being able to boast of overwhelming success as far as the re-evaluation of the old traditional celebrations are concerned, but a very conscious effort is being made. In the last analysis, revival of heritage cannot be achieved by the hypoder-

mic method of injections and artificial stimulants. Undoubtedly a system of tradition, beyond planning, will have to develop in the new generation. The holidays and festivals which are linked closely to the nature of the country and to the ideals of national liberation come closest to complete acceptance.

In addition to the reincarnation of the old nature festivals, there are the newer holidays connected with the men and events of the national renaissance movement. These holidays, intimately bound to the people by the actual memory of the events are likely to become an integral part of the national heritage.

The Sabbath, as a tradition and as a social idea, is developing into its own right and is preserving a little of the mystic significance of the religious Sabbath. Festivals concerned with agriculture, water, and other natural phenomena are easily endowed with their old significance plus a very practical appreciation of their social import.

15. The Kvutza Movement

Even in the early days, when the number of kvutzot was very small, a need was felt for the federation of these groups. Until the end of the World War, however, nothing was done in this direction. Until 1920 there were only a few kvutzot with a very small membership.* Their population constituted a very small percentage of the general labor movement, which, itself, numbered hardly two thousand. Only with the post-war large scale immigration could the kvutzot free themselves of their isolation. Only at the beginning of the thirties could any attempt to unite the existing kvutzot as well as those recently established into a chain of cooperatives hope to be successful. At that time problems began to arise which could not be settled by individual kvutzot. Questions like the accommodation of new pioneers, absorption into existing kvutzot and the creation of new ones called for joint action.

The older kvutzot like Dagan, Merhavia and Kinneret were alive to this need and took the initiative in the creation of a league of kvutzot. This league was called the Hever Hakvutzot. This body, intended to create bonds between existing groups and to extend help to new ones, was not crowned with success. Apart from general conferences and services rendered to newly settled groups which could have been done without an organizational network, nothing practical was achieved that might have worked toward the creation of a united kvutza movement. New waves of immigrants brought new ideas as to how a kvutza should be constituted, and although Dagan continued to be a model of community life, they found the pattern inadequate. To some the old small kvutza of about 60 members seemed insufficient in view of the needs of large-scale immigration.

* At the beginning of 1941 the total population in the kvutzot was about 26,000. The working population amounted to 20,000, of whom 9,800 were in the collectives affiliated with the Kibutz Meuchad, 5,500 in the Kibutz Artzi, and 3,400 in Hever Hakvutzot. There are another 1,200 in minor groupings, or in kvutzot without country-wide affiliation. The largest kvutza is Yagur, with a population of some 1,200.

The total number of kvutzot is 85, of which some 75 are on Jewish National Fund land. This, of course, does not include over 50 moshavim with a population of some 9,000.

Economic considerations seemed to indicate clearly that larger units would be more advantageous, offering a livelihood to a larger number of persons. Others thought that the small kvutza was too narrow and self-contained to correspond to their social and cultural needs.

Actually the thing which stood in the way of unity was a deep psychological difference between two generations. People of the old kvutzot, who laid the foundations of the kvutza in Palestine, created their communities at a time when there was no great immigration into the country. During this time differences of origin, mentality, character, and social outlook were levelled out. With the wave of new immigrants after the war, it was found that many could not adapt themselves easily to the mentality of the veterans. Many of the new immigrants came from countries where they had been organized in Zionist youth movements with definite notions of their own. They were somewhat unwilling to be tutored by the veterans, regardless of their experience, being anxious to preserve complete independence by the creation of their own communal forms. Subsequent development shows that different concepts were in operation.

From 1923 until 1926 the federation of kvutzot (Hever Hakvutzot) functioned as a mere moral authority over its member groups with no organizational or ideological influence. By that time there were two quite large kvutzot, Ayn Harod and Tel Yosef, with about 200 members in each, and some groups of Hashomer Hatzair which chose the form of "organic units" of 100 members each. Thus the large kvutzot and the moderately large groups differed at least in size from the first collectives. The two new types tried several times to establish their own national federations but without success because of limited immigration and real lack of ideological clarity. Between 1926 and 1927 the Hashomer Hatzair succeeded in creating its national federation which it called "Kibutz Artzi"; and the large kvutzot were federated into a body which is called "Kibutz Meuchad". The old Hever Hakvutzot embraced only its original groups which centered around Dagan and which meanwhile had given up the dogma of the "small kvutza" and had quite increased in size.

David Remez, a leader of the Federation of Jewish Labor in Palestine, once remarked that splits in the labor movement are always self-perpetuating. From the moment of their birth they begin to find permanent reasons why they must continue to exist. This applies to the split in the kvutza movement in Palestine. The

qualification of size has never been the only *bona fide* reason for the separate existence of the three federations. When the two later federations were constituted, the groups patterned on Daganian were no longer small kvutzot. At the time Kibutz Artzi was founded, almost all of the small groups had ceased to be small. As time passed an ideology was formulated which justified, or seemed to justify, the existence of each of the separate groups and seemed to give them a different complexion and aim. Present-day trends indicate a growing tendency toward a unification of the kvutza movement. At present only minor and insignificant differences in social philosophy seem to stand in the way. It is only because of the confusion of political thought in our times that a final union has not yet been achieved.

16. Conclusion

The kvutza is not a temporary success of visionaries striving to realize a social utopia in the desert. It has exhibited a remarkable capacity for survival, in spite of ominous predictions that the stabilization of economic and social conditions in Palestine would spell its downfall. During the thirty-two years since Daganian was established, the Palestinian kvutza has survived many and varied crises. It has passed through periods of Zionist stagnation and through periods of urban prosperity which might have lured members away from the cooperatives. During the last twenty years membership of the kvutzot has risen from barely a few hundred to well over twenty thousand. Economic and social achievements, based upon the accumulation of experience and efficiency, indicate that the stability of membership is very high.

Kvutzot differ from one another as individuals differ, though all of them possess basic traits in common. There are kvutzot which place emphasis on economic efficiency, distinguishing themselves in the invention of new methods of work. Others put stress on the social improvement of the pattern of communal living. Still others devote much of their energy to cultural activities, or to all of these together. Though every new kvutza derives its technique from the experience of the other kvutzot, each tries to mold its own pattern. None of the new groups seem content to imitate their precursors.

In the course of the years the kvutza has exhibited a good deal of elasticity. There were times when everyone believed that the group must never grow larger than about 50 or 60 persons. There was a general belief that only an intimate group of friends can realize community life and that larger numbers would mean the loss of personal attachments and would make community life cold and meaningless. Today there are kvutzot whose membership goes into the hundreds. The kvutza seems to be able to adapt itself to changes of economic and social conditions, transforming its pattern accordingly. Even many of the original concepts of the kvutza have undergone a metamorphosis. Perhaps this was because the kvutza never considered communal life to be the ultimate aim of human aspirations. What distinguishes the kvutza from similar social attempts is the fact that

the kvutza was never a sect. It did not consider itself an attempt to escape from the individualist and competitive world. The kvutza makes no attempt to escape the realities of life in the outside world. On the contrary, it is vitally interested in furthering the development of Jewish colonization and serves as a vanguard of all the constructive forces contributing to the upbuilding of the country. The kvutza sees itself not as an island of escape from the wickedness of the world, but as a crucible for world change. Most members of the kvutzot are convinced that there can be no equality between human beings without social cooperation. Since equality is one of the essentials of the labor movement, the kvutza considers itself as the most socially advanced section of the Palestinian labor movement.

Much of the fervent attachment of a great many members of the kvutza to the collective ideal is to be attributed to the character of these people to whom the only chance for personal freedom from employers and petty economic difficulties lies in the kvutza. Members of the kvutza faced with the alternative of apparent freedom on a privately owned farm or work in the collective with its inevitable limitation of a certain amount of personal freedom, nevertheless have chosen the kvutza. The drudgery, the worry, the ties and the strains involved in the private farm makes the freedom illusory while the kvutza gives them, in spite of its discipline, a sense of real freedom.

Nor should it be thought that the kvutza is the refuge for the misfit and the misanthrope. It requires the most highly integrated individuals to live together in a tightly knit community. They consider the kvutza as the revival and the reassertion of the old principle of the Jewish community, of "arevut hadadit" (mutual responsibility).

The kvutza has learned much in the years of its existence. It has learned a great deal of the limits and potentialities of the individual. It has developed an understanding of the needs of the people. It has attained a certain spiritual maturity. It has learned that in the great forest of trees, each is an individual whole and that the trees must not be sacrificed to the forest.

The kvutza has no binding constitution and no written laws. The constitution of the kvutza is the conscience of its members. The survival of the kvutza in spite of many trials and much adversity gives the assurance that it has come to stay, as an enduring form of a human community.